

Drama Guild Gazette

SOUTH SIDE HIGH SCHOOL STAGES CELEBRATED DISNEY MUSICAL

NEWSIES

The Student Cast, Crew, and Pit Deliver an Exceptional Performance

ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NEW YORK: Anyone within traveling distance of South Side High School should get ready to be swept away by high-energy choreography, an inspiring story, and unforgettable music as Arts RVC proudly presents its production of Disney's *Newsies*, the Tony Award-winning musical with music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Jack Feldman, and a book by Harvey Fierstein. The Show based on the 1992 Disney film, will be performed at the South Side auditorium on April 2 and 3 at 4:30 p.m., and April 4 and 5 at 7:00 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at sshs.seatyourself.biz.

Newsies tells the thrilling tale of a group of newsboys who take a stand against powerful newspaper moguls in 1899 New York City. The musical, inspired by real events, features vibrant characters and unforgettable songs such as "Seize the Day," "Carrying the Banner," and "King of New York."

Director Dr. Russell M. Dembin brings a fresh, dynamic approach to the production, while choreographer Ms. Dana McDonald has crafted spectacular, high-energy dance numbers that are sure to captivate the audience. The music director, Dr. Doreen Fryling, ensures that the singing is flawless and Mr. Anthony Pomponio effortlessly conducts a student orchestra.

The high schoolers are also ecstatic to share the stage with two fifth graders from the district who will alternate in the role of Les.

At the end of the performance, attendees should expect to leave the theater singing and dancing. South Side's *Newsies* is sure to make headlines — this is a show you don't want to miss.



THE ARTS IN RVC

The Director of the Arts Provides Insight into South Side's New Programs

By Elena Mingorance

Kathleen Mark, director of the arts for Rockville Centre Schools, spoke about the new courses being offered at the high school level. "South Side High School is slated to offer two new arts courses next year: Unified Theater and IB [International Baccalaureate] Dance. Unified Theater is an inclusive course that brings together special education and general education students to engage in a comprehensive

study of theater arts." She continued, "By participating in a variety of theatrical activities, including acting, directing, set design, and costume construction, students will develop essential life skills such as creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Through these experiences, students will gain confidence, enhance their communication skills, and foster a deeper understanding of themselves and others." The other new course, IB Dance, "explores dance as a multifaceted art form that transcends

cultural and historical boundaries," Mark explained. "Through practical and theoretical study, students will develop their technical skills, creativity, and critical thinking abilities. By analyzing dance works, experimenting with movement, and creating their own choreographies, students will gain a deep understanding of the role of dance in society and its impact on individuals. This course can satisfy IB Group 6 subject requirements for IB Diploma candidates."

The South Side
High School

**Drama
Guild
Gazette**

Published by
**Richner
Communications, Inc.,
and Arts RVC**

■
Editors-in-Chief
**Ryan Borruso
Elena Mingorance**

■
Senior Editors
**Cayleigh Ricchiuti
Conor Stack**

■
Assistant Editor
Nora Donohue

■
*Additional
Contributions*
**Doreen Fryling
Kathleen Mark**

■
Publisher
Russell M. Dembin

■
Executive Publisher
Kathleen Mark

■
Creative Director
Jeffrey A. Negrin

■
Project Manager
Ethan Kimbrell



Top row, left to right: Katherine Borruso, Reagan Zelles, Brooke Antonicelli, Alyssa Breen, Olivia McCutchan, Lucy Frain, Alice Hoyos, Hailey Frain
Middle: Gabriella Amato, Julianna Bragino, Sophia Lewis, Keira DeLuca
Bottom: Sonia Dorrego, Fiona Wyremski, Olivia Bragino, Olivia Toscano, Nora Donohue

**‘Newsies’ Cast, Pit, and
Crew Rock Red & Blue**

**Many of the Show’s Participants Lent
Their Voices and Athletic Skills to
South Side’s Annual Competition**

By Conor Stack

A sizable number of students involved with South Side High School’s staging of *Newsies* also participated in the school’s Red & Blue competition in early March. The Red Team showcased, among others, actors Reagan Zelles and Alice Hoyos and stage manager Lucy Frain, while the Blue Team packed their own punches with cast members such as Keira DeLuca and Katherine Borruso. In preparing for the competition, the teams got to brush up on their dance moves through plenty of practice, which helped, as in any stage production, to make their teams the best they could possibly be. Red & Blue is not only a competition; it’s an event that, despite breaking people up by teams, brings the players together in a show of great sportsmanship from both sides. Much like this event, the story depicted in *Newsies* is all about unity and setting aside differences, and building a community of friends through collaboration is what South Side’s Drama Guild is all about. In addition to the competing teams, the Video Club — which captured the events for the live stream — and the crew for the games also featured members of the production, such as announcers Malachi Burns-Sharoff, Conor Stack, and Max Maina and technical crew members, like Ava Steele, Sophia Grunfeld, and Rory Zukerman. In a nail-biting finale, the Red Team triumphed over the Blue Team by a single point. Although only one side claimed the title of victor, by the end of the night, the teams were brought together in a beautiful moment of friendship. “Union’d they stand!”

Conor Stack plays Joseph Pulitzer in *Newsies* and serves as one of the production’s assistant directors. He is also a member of the Video Club.

**‘Newsies’ Performers
Make Inclusion Center Stage**

SSHS Students Participate in Accessible Programs at School and in Town

By Ryan Borruso

Many cast, crew, and pit members of South Side High School’s *Newsies* take part in the school’s theater productions as well as Centre Stage, an inclusive extracurricular theater program that some call “the heartbeat” of the Rockville Centre School District — an initiative in which students of different learning abilities work together to stage a musical. Last year, the cast of Centre Stage on Broadway featured around 50 students, and nearly half of them are involved in *Newsies*. That 2024 Centre Stage show incorporated songs from a variety of musicals such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Wicked*, *Annie*, and even *Newsies*. General-education students guide “buddies” through the

inner workings of a show, including memorizing lines, blocking, and dancing. They work side by side as they experience the challenge and excitement of live theater.

Similar in mission to Centre Stage, Rockville Centre-based nonprofit the Backyard Players presents inclusive arts-based events designed to support people with disabilities. Megan Chiara, who plays Romeo and one of the Bowery Beauties in *Newsies*, participates in both Centre Stage and the Backyard Players. “These programs enable us to have inclusion, allowing us to make new friends in a community we don’t normally have,” said Chiara, adding that the relationships she forms with kids in the two groups are deeply important

Continued on page 7



Cayleigh Ricchiuti (right) was selected to be one of three students to interview keynote speaker Kristin Chenoweth (center) at November’s Stage the Change conference at Tilles Center.

**SHAPING CREATIVE MINDS
A Look into IB Theatre**

**A South Side Senior Shares How the
Class Promotes Rigor and Creativity**

By Cayleigh Ricchiuti

Along with extraordinary arts extracurriculars, South Side High School is the only public school in Nassau County currently running International Baccalaureate (IB) courses in theater, which offer students a unique opportunity to explore the world of theater and performance in a creative and academically rigorous environment. The class — which centers on four IB assessments when taken in two years or three assessments in the single-year version — challenges students to develop their acting skills, deepen their understanding of theater history, and engage with the various elements of stage production, from directing to designing.

Through exercises, performances projects, and critical analysis of theater texts, students gain an understanding of the artistic, historical, and analytical aspects of theater. They also have the chance to perform and create original works, often collaborating with their peers to bring their visions to life. This past January the IB Theatre Seniors presented their annual Student Directed plays where the seniors pick a play to cast, direct, and stage before an audience.

The IB Theatre course is designed for students who are passionate about the arts and want to challenge themselves in a collaborative setting. The class encourages creativity, teamwork, thoughtful discussion, and a deep appreciation for the power of performance to communicate ideas and emotions. Whether or not students are interested in pursuing a career in the arts, the course offers an enriching experience that can help develop lifelong skills in communication,



Ken Cemiglia (original dramaturg of *Newsies*, *Hadestown*, *Redwood*, and other shows) meets virtually with the IB Theatre class.

writing, problem solving, and artistic expression.

Elanor Rubin, a junior at South Side, is an active participant in the school’s IB Theatre program, which she has found both engaging and enriching. She celebrated how students in the class “get to learn about all aspects of theater, both on- and offstage.” She described the program as dynamic, with a wide range of activities that challenge students at different levels of focus and experience. The variety of exercises, Rubin noted, allows participants to explore different aspects of performance and production, fostering both creativity and technical growth. Fellow junior James Herard added: “This class gives a unique perspective and gives me knowledge about things that I wouldn’t have if I hadn’t taken this class.”

Rubin also highlighted the value of the time provided for independent work, which has enabled her to refine her skills and develop her craft at her own pace. This balance of structured group activities and personal exploration has served as an integral aspect of the theater program. Moreover, Rubin emphasizes the value of the opportunity to “research what goes on behind the curtain.”

MEET THE NEWSIES

Inside the Cast’s Process, from First Rehearsal through Opening Night

By Elena Mingorance

Conor Stack, a South Side High School senior who plays Joseph Pulitzer in the school’s staging of *Newsies*, described the show as a story about “a lot of people coming together,” and said he feels grateful to be part of such a tight-knit community. He noted that *Newsies* is different from the other South Side productions he has participated in, such as *Matilda the Musical* and *Pride and Prejudice*, and he has enjoyed the change of pace. While *Pride and Prejudice* was more proper and serious in nature, Stack explained that *Newsies* is “much more about accepting those rugged things in life.”

Performing in this musical has also presented new challenges for Stack. “Bottom line, I’m not all that used to singing,” he admitted. “So having my own song is pretty difficult — it’s a little daunting, but it’s really fun.” Stack feels that the show’s message about unions standing up for what they believe in holds particular significance today. In a society often marked by division and judgment, he said, he believes that even small acts of unity can spark meaningful change. “Even if it’s a change so small, like in the show, as just a few people banding together, it turns into something huge.”

Stack commented that he loves the song “Once and for All,” one of the final major numbers, noting the power that comes from the song’s central idea that “we’re not going to let anything stop us.” As a graduating senior, Stack finds leaving South Side’s theater community bittersweet. He said he will miss working with the crew and cast, and knows it will be different forming similar bonds in college. He observed that even over this past year he has created incredibly strong relationships, but knows that starting fresh will allow him to make new connections.

Fellow senior **Cayleigh Ricchiuti**, one of the performers alternating in the role of Katherine Plumber, said, “The most exciting part about being in *Newsies* has been the opportunity to be double-cast as both Katherine and a newsboy.” She added that the piece “is such a right-of-passage show to do, and I am so grateful that I not only get to play one, but two roles in this company. Working with Amalia [Breen] as my Katherine double has been such a lovely experience and getting to be part of such a wonderful ensemble of *Newsies* is so, so fun.

“Compared to other productions at South Side and community theater companies, this is probably the most dance-heavy show I have ever done, and it has truthfully been so rewarding.” She continued, “In my roles I feel like I got the best of both worlds as I get to be a large part of propelling the story as Katherine, but also partake in all of the big ensemble dance numbers as a newsie.” She said that the show’s choreographer, Dana McDonald, “works so hard to create choreography that will both excite and challenge us—and because of the devotion of this company, it comes together so beautifully!

“Like anything worth pursuing, I had many challenges I had to overcome during this experience. Number one being tap! I was a tap-dancing policeman my freshman year in South Side’s production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, so leading a tap number in my senior year show felt very full circle.” However, she conceded, “I am by no means a tapper, and this was certainly more advanced than my freshman-year performance. Luckily, I wasn’t struggling alone, we all worked hard and got there together.” Another significant challenge for her, she said, is Katherine’s solo number, “Watch What Happens.” She remarked, “Aside from the song just being really hard to sing and feeling like I ran a marathon, it is a very vulnerable song. It is the first time the audience really sees Katherine in her element. That whole song is just her walking through her thought process. I had to give life and nuance to every little thing she said (and she says many, many things).” Ricchiuti recalled how, throughout the process of learning the song, music director Doreen Fryling would often ask, “Why does she start singing about this?” in hopes that it would help Katherine’s character come through so that it would resonate as much as possible with the audience.

“This show has made me feel so empowered in so many ways,” Ricchiuti said. “I have never felt prouder to be a young person in this world. If I were to take away anything from this show it would be that anyone can make a difference, no matter who you are or what your circumstances are. Kids are awesome and have cool things to say!”

Ricchiuti also spoke about how deeply she connects with Katherine, “because she is so ambitious and passionate about what she does. She is a strong young woman who wants to be taken seriously in her career. As I go on to pursue a career in the arts, I will carry the confidence that Katherine has instilled in me.”

As a graduating senior, Ricchiuti is keenly aware of how South Side’s theater department has influenced her future in acting. “This theater community has been such a gift and such an important part of who I am today,” she said. “The South Side stage has always been a safe space for me to explore, learn, grow, and love. It has ignited a fire in me that I hope will continue to burn as I pursue more theatrical endeavors on new stages. The South Side High School Drama Guild will always hold a special place in my heart. I am so excited to perform with these beautiful people one last time, ‘once and for all!’”

Another senior, **Jose Cruz Rincon**, who plays Crutchie, said the most exciting part of his experience in *Newsies* “is the huge opportunities for everyone involved and how it brings together so many people because of the production process. The other shows I’ve been in were productions that were not nearly as big as *Newsies*. I especially enjoy this production over the others because I personally love the musical so much.”

Cruz Rincon also spoke about the challenges involved in the production. “I think the hardest thing collectively for everyone are the dance scenes. Due to the professionalism of our choreographer, Ms. Dana, each dance scene is treated and cared for in detail.”

“With the political and social climate of the world right now,” Cruz Rincon said, “I think it is so important that we especially portray the injustices that are happening in real time but through theater.”

Regarding his connection to his character, Cruz Rincon commented, “Personally I care so much for Crutchie because he is such a brave and caring character despite his own shortcomings.” He observed that he was particularly struck by Crutchie’s “approach towards life,” adding. “I hope to be as good and strong a person as he is.

“As a graduating senior I am so thrilled to be Crutchie for my last show at South Side. I will definitely miss the silly little traditions that we have, but I am so ready to start a new chapter of my life.”

Connor Reilly, a senior who has the lead role of Jack Kelly, said, the most exhilarating part of being in this production “is the high-energy atmosphere. The show requires everyone to really be on their feet and stay energized and there’s never a dull moment. The show is just go, go, go.

“I’ve never had a role of this caliber before. Some shows don’t even have roles as big as Jack. I mean I’m in every scene. Jack’s really the center of the show, and so it really is a responsibility. I know that other people, especially younger cast members, are looking up to me.”

Reilly commented on the challenges of the show, saying, “The hardest part for me is definitely the dance. Yeah, the singing is hard. I sing a high A in almost every song. But remembering all the dancing, especially ‘Seize the Day,’ is definitely the hardest for me. And then there’s also the lines, which are a whole other giant to tackle.

“I feel like this story is super important right now,” Connor noted. “Everyone should listen to the young people. We know what’s up. And it’s our world, we’re the ones who are gonna be stuck with it, ya know? So I think we deserve to make some decisions. And that’s what this show is about. People need to take us kids seriously.”

Reilly also feels that the show’s music holds deep meaning. “‘Santa Fe’ is the song that means the most to me in this show. I’ve always longed for something more, an escape,

and that is what ‘Santa Fe’ is about. I’ve always felt the need to escape. And that’s why I love theater, I think, because it’s an escape from the world around us. But ‘Santa Fe’ definitely resonates with me the most, especially with college coming up.

“There isn’t a better way I could imagine ending my senior year. This is a role I never even imagined I would have the opportunity to play, and I still can’t believe I’m getting the chance.” “However, he said, “it is sad leaving this community because it’s a special community and I’ll never find anything else like it, but I know that I’m going to love college, and I look forward to that.”

Amalia Breen, a junior who shares the role of Katherine with Ricchiuti, stated, “I love watching the show come together and being a part of such a talented cast doing something so fun!” She effuses, “I’ve had so much fun in this production since I have been with all of my friends and even my little sister [ensemble member Alyssa Breen], which is such a special, rewarding experience.”

Like a number of her fellow cast members, Breen discussed the obstacles she has faced in dancing. “As someone who’s never tapped before in my life, I’ve been really struggling with tap, but I’ve improved a lot, and really enjoy it!”

Breen mentioned that “*Newsies* is such an important show today, because it shows that even the smallest people can make a big impact.” She also noted the impact of the music, saying, “I love ‘Watch What Happens,’ which is a song I sing as Katherine, and I love singing it so much because it really lets you into her brain, and you really get to see her internal thoughts, which is so fun for me.”

Keira DeLuca, a senior playing Medda Larkin for half the performances, commented, “The most exciting part of this production has been to sing, dance, and act with all my friends. The community of wonderful actors has been so exciting! This show is different from ones I have done [in the past] due to the large number of underclassmen” and how few women characters there are.

“The hardest song to master was ‘That’s Rich’ due to how big of a song it is,” DeLuca recalled. Regarding the show’s relevance today, she said, “It’s important to bring this specific story to the audience to have people understand what it was like for women back then and how bad child labor laws were.” DeLuca also favors the character she plays, “due to all the things she had accomplished despite all the discrimination she faced.”

As a graduating senior, Keira reflects on her experience at the high school. “*Newsies* being the last production I will be in at South Side makes me sad to think about. In my high school career the musical has been such a large part of my life every year when January rolled around and auditions started that was when a community began. The biggest thing I will miss is being able to have an outlet of people that love to dance, sing and act.”

Junior **Elanor Rubin**, who alternates with DeLuca in the role of Medda, stated, “The most exciting part of being in *Newsies* is having a double. It’s really cool to see how different we both are and what we both bring to the role, and I look up to her [DeLuca] so much.

“This show is very different from other shows I’ve been in because I get to play two characters who are complete opposites from each other” and from characters she’s played on the South Side stage before.

She agrees with DeLuca about the challenge of learning “That’s Rich,” and she noted, “I’ve spent a lot of time practicing it and trying to make it unique in my own way.”

Rubin added, “The dance to ‘Carrying the Banner’ means the most to me because the recurring section is what we all learned in auditions, and it was so fun. I am not in the number, but knowing the dance and seeing all the *newsies* having so much fun doing it makes me really happy. It’s nice knowing that there is something that the full cast knows how to do and can share the joy in.”

Elena Mingorance serves as showcase designer and co-dramaturg for *Newsies*.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

The Rehearsal Process of South Side’s ‘Newsies’ Stage Crew

By Elena Mingorance

COSTUMES

Jose Cruz Rincon has worked on costumes for a few of South Side High School’s theater productions and has found the experience to be highly rewarding. He spoke about the supportive community, where everyone contributed to staying organized and maintaining a neat environment. The collaborative atmosphere made the process not only productive but also enjoyable.

Cruz Rincon, who also plays Crutchie in the school’s production of *Newsies*, shared that he “really liked getting insight into the show,” as organizing the costumes before the cast received them gave him a deeper understanding of the production process. He enjoyed learning how to measure and adjust costumes, developing technical skills that extend beyond the theater. Serving as head of the costume department for the show strengthened his leadership and problem-solving abilities, and he said he’s found ways to apply his sewing skills and organizational experience to other areas of his life.

PROPS

Hailey Frain, the head of props for *Newsies*, says, “Honestly I love every part of theater at SSHS. It is fun, and an amazing way to get involved.” He continued, “The whole group is so welcoming to everyone, even people who have never been a part of drama or theater, which was me when I joined. Everyone is so helpful and kind, and it’s such a good environment to be in. Running props is such an important part of the show, and it helps build an amazing production. Being able to work with a small group of people and manage what goes on with props is not only fun but makes me proud of them and this fabulous group of people that put on a show, both cast and crew. SSHS theater is one big family that helps each other, and comes together to do that. It doesn’t matter who you are, where you came from or anything. It’s such a beautiful thing to be a part of and I’m so glad I joined, and I cannot wait to see what everyone does next.”

LIGHTS AND SOUND

Ava Steele, who leads the sound crew, mentioned, “Working sound at South Side means being part of such a supportive community. All supervisors and staff create an environment that’s fully conducive to learning, and you can tell everyone there truly loves what they do.” Specifically, Steele noted that working on sound design for the past two years “has taught me time management and responsibility, which are super helpful to have in general. I’ve worked on the sound team since my sophomore year, and because of that experience I plan to continue in college.”

Newsies head of lighting **Melkis Lopez** commented, “Doing the lights for the productions at South Side for the last three years was one of the best things I could have decided to do.” He continued that the experience has enabled him “to be more involved with the school and this amazing group of other students that are able to put on amazing shows” Regarding how he got into stage lighting, Lopez recalled that initially he was drawn to it because of his “love for photography, as they go well together, but soon I came to appreciate all the other aspects of theater when I learned about them. It’s also really amazing how inclusive everyone in theater is, so you never really feel left out no matter your position in it.”

DRAMATURGY

Ryan Borruso, who serves as co-dramaturg alongside Elena Mingorance and also plays trumpet in the pit, has found his role in theater to be eye-opening and creatively fulfilling. At first he didn’t realize the depth and complexity of the position of dramaturg or the wide range of possibilities it offers. Reflecting on the experience, Borruso explained that dramaturgy “basically encompasses the whole chronology of the production that is being put on,” adding that the role allows for “a lot of creative freedom in the rehearsal room to give input, advertise, and engage the audience.”

Borruso also noted that serving as co-dramaturg has strengthened his connection with the cast. Having previously been more involved on the crew side as a stage manager, he was used to answering logistical questions and managing behind-the-scenes tasks. Now, as a dramaturg, he feels more integrated with the cast, offering artistic input and collaborating more closely during rehearsals.

SHOWCASE

The showcase, a display case in the lobby of South Side High School, is decorated for each theater production, serving as a visual representation of the hard work and creativity behind the scenes. **Elena Mingorance** has worked alongside Zoey Dwyer in designing the showcase for the past few productions at South Side, and she said she’s found the experience “deeply rewarding. Collaborating with others to create a display that captures the essence of each show,” she said, has strengthened her sense of creativity and teamwork.

Mingorance emphasized how working with others to design the showcase has “mirrored the collaborative spirit of theater itself. Theater relies on the combined efforts of many individuals, and designing a visual representation of the production,” she said, “has taught her valuable skills in communication and creative problem-solving.” She finds it especially gratifying to see the reactions of students and

staff who may not be directly involved in the production but are drawn in by the display. “This sense of connection and shared excitement has made the experience even more meaningful.”

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Lucy Frain, stage manager for *Newsies*, described her role as one that allows “one-on-one connections with everybody in the cast, crew, and pit.” Managing the technical aspects of the show, she said, has given her the opportunity to engage with each group on a personal level, fostering a deeper understanding of how all the elements of the production come together. Frain reflected on the collaborative nature of her work, saying that working with the cast during rehearsals, coordinating with the pit during sitzprobe — the first combined musical rehearsal — and guiding the crew through tech week is an experience that she’s felt “lucky to have.”

Frain described theater as “such a huge family,” and believes that *Newsies* in particular embodies the spirit of unity and support that defines South Side’s theater community. She admires how the production highlights powerful role models and themes of standing up for one’s beliefs. Katherine Plumber, the feminist reporter in the show who boldly speaks her mind without fear of judgment, represents the strength and confidence that Frain feels permeates the theater environment.

Assistant stage manager (ASM) **William Barriocanal** reflects on his growth and experience throughout his time in high school theater: He began with working on set construction during Saturday crew calls, where he developed an appreciation for the rehearsal process. As he became more involved, Barriocanal said, he realized that every element is equally important in the creation of the production. He mentioned that he enjoys all aspects of his job as ASM, adding, “It is super easy to get along with everyone here because we all want the same thing, and that is to have a great show and to collaborate with each other.”

James Rakeman, another assistant stage manager for *Newsies*, described his experience as “nothing but amazing,” crediting the stage management team and directors for their kindness and support. He feels that the production has been running smoothly and is genuinely excited for the show to open. Rakeman highlighted the sense of community among the crew and everyone involved, emphasizing how the supportive atmosphere has made his experience even more meaningful.

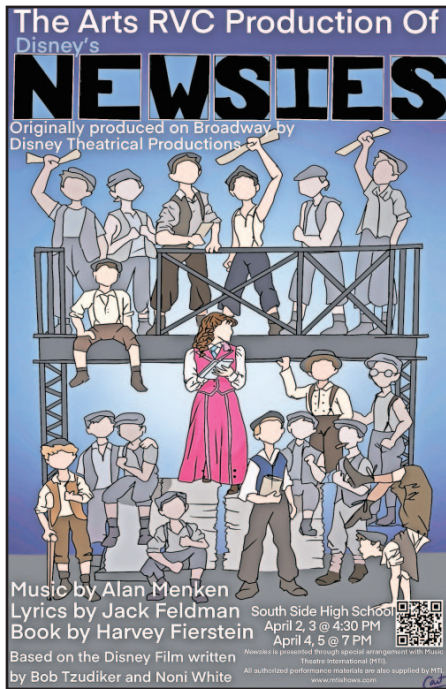
Rakeman also reflected on how much he has learned since joining theater. “I came into high school not knowing anything about theater,” he admitted, “but the community — especially the upperclassmen when I was a freshman — really taught me everything I needed to know.” Now he values the opportunity to pass on that knowledge.



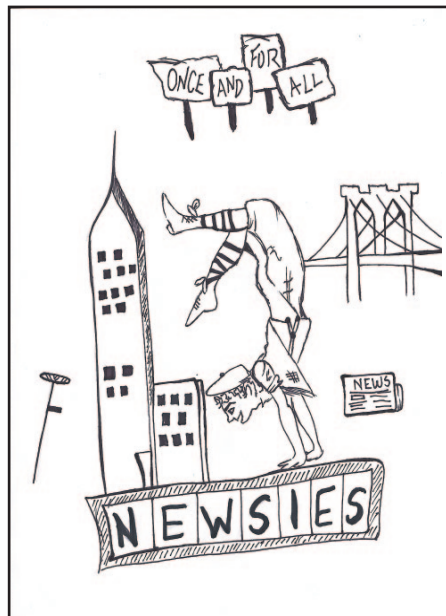
NEWSIES Poster Art Entries

5

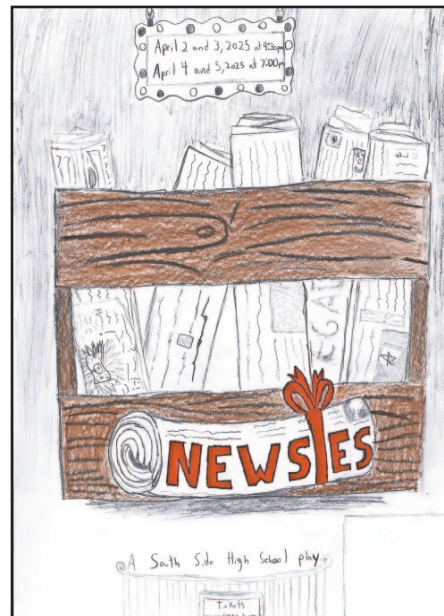
Students from across South Side High School's art programs showcased their creativity by submitting designs for a *Newsies* poster and playbill cover contest, presented by the Drama Guild and the Art Club.



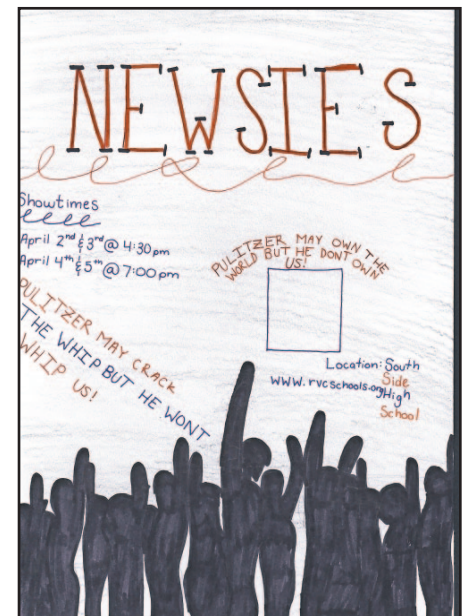
Caitlin Reid
Winner for poster



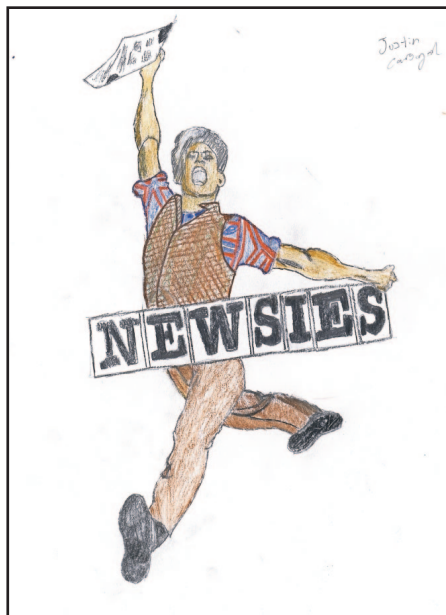
Olivia Riva
Winner for playbill cover



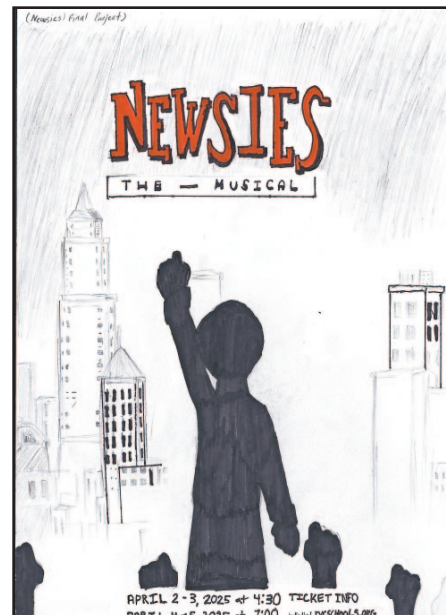
Evan Markov



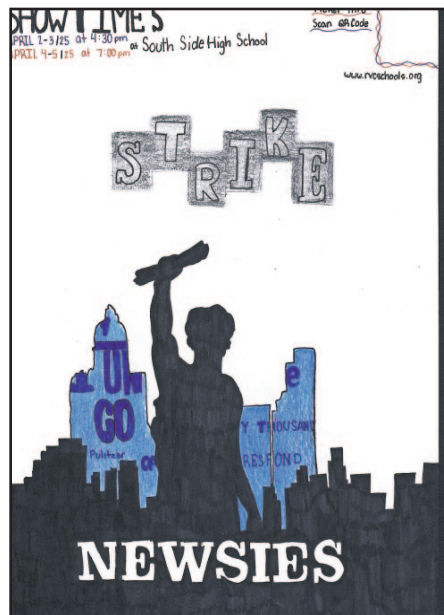
Grace Mullin



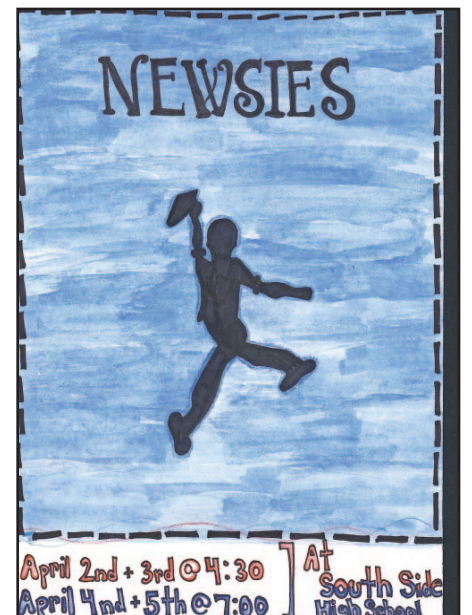
Justin Carbajal



Logan Dessalines



Madison Depellegrin



Madison Gutmann



Nolan Ward



Elijah Ebron



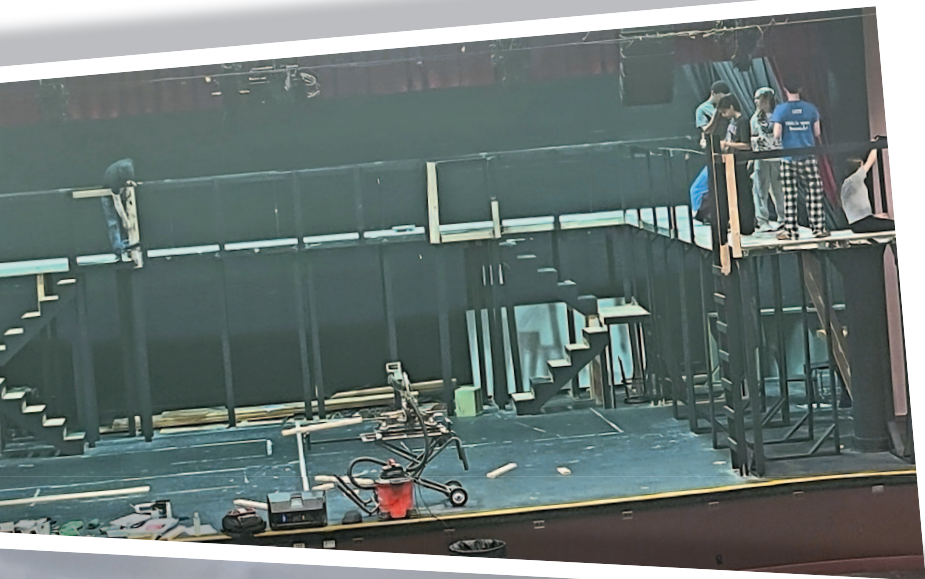
Renhia Mars



Trip Treanor

NEWSIES Rehearsals





Center, from left to right: *Newsies* cast members Amalia Breen, Alyssa Breen, Megan Chiara, and Charlotte Rocafort. Not pictured: *Newsies* cast members Sonia Dorrego and Elanor Rubin.

‘Newsies’ Performers

Continued from page 2

to her. “The work that we do here [in South Side theater], we are able to bring back to the Backyard Players,” she noted. “We were just able to teach kids choreography we learned [for *Newsies*] and even write portions of the script for our upcoming Centre Stage production.”

Jose Cruz Rincon (Crutchie) commented on how crucial such programs are for inclusivity. As he observed, they bring “diverse groups of people together to spread joy, happiness, and a love for theater to those who might not be able to access it.” Centre Stage and the Backyard Players demonstrate that the arts, and specifically theater, are for everyone, and illustrate why every person regardless of ability deserves a safe space in which to learn, develop friendships, share ideas and experiences, and look after one another.

HELP SUPPORT



Local businesses face challenges every day, but your source for trusted local news doesn't have to be one of them. Now more than ever, we need your support to continue delivering high-quality community journalism straight to you. Consider supporting the Herald with a small donation—whether one-time or monthly—to help keep local news strong. To donate Scan this QR code.



**Staying up to date with everything
happening in Rockville Centre
and your schools is easy.**

Subscribe now!

**Simply scan this QR code
to subscribe to the**

ROCKVILLE CENTRE

HERALD



Rockville Centre ARTS



ALL-STATE MUSICIANS



CHAMBER SINGERS



JAZZ ENSEMBLE MUSICIANS - Photo by Keith Rossein



WIND ENSEMBLE



RIVERSIDE ALL-COUNTY MUSICIANS



CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



TRI-M MUSIC HONOR SOCIETY



WATSON ALL-COUNTY MUSICIANS

Rockville Centre ARTS

9



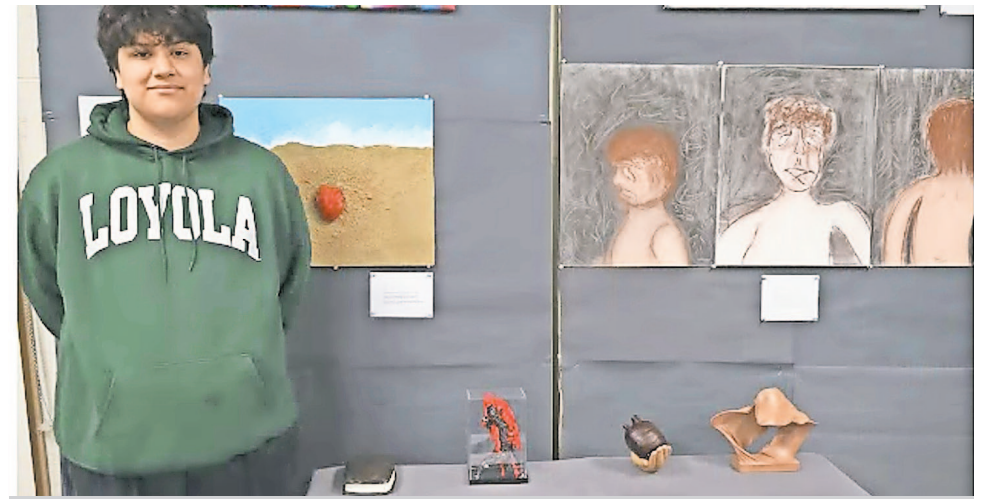
HEWITT ALL-COUNTY MUSICIANS



SSMS JAZZ BAND



SSMS FALL REVUE



IB ART EXHIBITION



COVERT ALL-COUNTY MUSICIANS



WILSON ALL-COUNTY MUSICIANS



THE DRAMA GUILD'S FALL PLAY, *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*



RIVERSIDE BUDDIES



The cast and pit orchestra of South Side's *Newsies* at the sitzprobe rehearsal.

BEHIND THE SCENES And Below the Stage

How the 'Newsies' Pit Orchestra Prepared

By Ryan Borruso

While the South Side High School cast of *Newsies* delivers high-energy performances filled with singing, dancing, and dramatic storytelling, there's another group of performers bringing the magic to life. Tucked below the stage, the *Newsies* pit orchestra provides the pulse of the show, playing Alan Menken's celebrated score with precision and passion. Under the direction of South Side band teacher

Mr. Anthony Pomponio, a seasoned pit musician who has played in more than 75 musicals in his career, the talented student ensemble has been hard at work for weeks.

"Unlike the comfort in a concert band or orchestra, where multiple musicians might play the same part, I'm

the only one in the pit playing this specific instrument," said Zoey Dwyer, who plays flute, piccolo, soprano, alto, and baritone saxophone in this production. Dwyer stated how in sync the musicians have to be with the actors to put on a stellar performance. Ryan Borruso, who plays trumpet and flugelhorn in the show and also serves as co-dramaturg, described the unique circumstances a musician encounters only when performing in the orchestra of a musical. "An actor drops a cue line, or the lights don't turn on when they should. Being able to adapt in real time — essentially performing on your toes — is necessary when playing in a pit orchestra."

Many don't realize how attentive the pit must be to come in on time. "Cueing the pit out of a vamp is always tricky," said Pomponio. Vamps are essentially music loops

that continue until the conductor proceeds with the music following a visual cue or a specific line. Pomponio said, "Timing them with the cast is always the hardest part for me." On the other hand, Dwyer and Borruso agreed that it is challenging to play the bows music in *Newsies*. "It's like a medley or culmination of all the melodies from the show. It's so much fun to play, but also so difficult to perform at the end of a two-hour show," Borruso observed. He went on to discuss some other obstacles he had to overcome, stating, "Some of these songs are nonstop for pages and pages, and we have to stay locked in the entire time." Despite the challenges, the pit musicians take pride in their roles. While audiences are swept away by the gripping story of the newsboys of 1899, every note, beat, and crescendo makes *Newsies* an unforgettable experience.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF MUSIC COURSEWORK ON CURRENT CAREERS AND STUDIES

compiled by Doreen Fryling, Ed.D.

Survey question: What was something about your music classes at SSHS that continues to help you in your life?

Psychology: “Without the arts curriculum, my high school experience would have been a nightmare and I would not be the person I am today. It helped me grow as a person, it taught me to express myself in creative ways and it is the reason I have all the friends I have today. I learned so much about music, theater and myself with the arts program at south side high school.”

Cataloguer, Manhattan Rare Book Company: “Music is always around us, and there are many ways to engage with it. Musical performance, composition, history and scholarship have all enriched my life, and each one began at South Side. There are so many career paths that involve music, even if they do not to be 'careers in music'. Advertisers and marketing associate need to utilize music to affect consumers' ideas of a product, booksellers and auctioneers need to predict the success of specific musical texts on the market, athletes need to take control of how music can improve their performance in training, software technicians at Spotify need to understand how users want to engage with their favorite songs. But beyond the 'value' of music, being able to talk intelligently about music has been such a vital skill in my life, both professionally and personally. Just as reading and writing are important skills not only for appreciating great works of literature but for communicating effectively with others, so too is understanding music as much about engaging with people as it is about enjoying various compositions.”

Technical Theater/Stage Management: “The RVC Arts program set me on the successful path I am on today. Not only in my professional working life but my personal life as well. The chamber singers performing in the hospital always warmed my heart. Being able to bring a little joy to people who are saving lives all day and to those who might be in a tough spot that day always

made me feel lighter and proud of what the arts can do. I hope RVC sees the value in the arts and what they can do for a community. I am one opinion among hundreds but the RVC arts programs made a huge difference in my life and I wouldn't be the person I am today without it.”

History: “The ownership we were given over our output, and the responsibility expected of us in these classes was really empowering. I went to college really believing in myself — my abilities, my talents, and potential. I've carried these things with me to adulthood.”

Scientist: Leadership and collaboration for sure. I would say these skills were vital in my preparation for college, and onwards in my studies. Work-wise, I have grown exponentially in learning to work cross-functionally and effectively with a large set of colleagues, to achieve a common goal.

MD-PhD: Teamwork skills! Working together in ensembles to create a polished finished product. Foundational music training instilled in me the value of continuous hard work and practice towards achieving your goal (from mastering a piece to studying for a challenging subject or practicing your teamwork/communication skills, or literally any skill.)

Music Education: “I found my ensembles to be my most meaningful arts classes due to how I've grown as a musician. Being a part of Wind Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, Concert Band, Stage Band and the Pit orchestra allowed me to meet and connect with so many different people, always feeling safe to express myself and embrace my creativity. Having the opportunity to work with such an incredible music staff from all over the district really inspired me, significantly influencing me to pursue a career in music education.”.

Drama Guild

Head of Fundraising
Jose Cruz Rincon

Trip Organizer
Connor Reilly

Director of Marketing
and Publicity
Cayleigh Ricchiuti

Treasurer
Lucy Frain

Event Planner
Elanor Rubin

Advisors
Russell M. Dembin
Doreen Fryling

Advisor Emeritus
Pamela Seiderman

Founding Advisor
Lawrence Waxman

LAST YEAR’S SENIORS WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

SSHS 2024 Theater and Music Graduates and the Schools They’re Attending
After leading vibrant lives in music and theater in high school, the graduating class of 2024 are now attending prestigious universities, where many continue to involve themselves in the arts

Paul Adal.....University of Miami Frost School of Music	Leah Gorence.....Scripps College	Caitlin Mullen.....Gettysburg University
Katherine Ahern.....University of South Carolina	Cooper Gottcent.....University of Delaware	Colleen Murphy.....SUNY Oswego
Nicolas Albarano Catholic University	Katherine Graci.....NYU	Emma Murphy.....University of Michigan
Ife Allison.....St. John's University	Benjamin Greenberg Binghamton University	Kyla Murphy.....Ohio State
Sofia Aristy.....University of Rhode Island	Alexandra Griffo.....Clemson University	Michael Muscarella Middlebury College
Paris Bailey Nassau Community College	Samuel Gruner Ithaca University	Robert Namnum.....Marist University
James Beatty.....University of Florida	Peter Hanc.....San Diego State	Ava Parker University of Georgia
Keira Bingham.....University of Vermont	Madeline Hansen.....University of Delaware	Madison Parker.....Howard University
Sophia Bracco.....Barnard College	Francis Hasin.....Purdue University	Ava Paternostro.....Wake Forest
Owen Cashman Manhattan School of Music	Elaina Heghes.....University of Virginia	Grace Pirrello.....Champlain College
Maureen Clancy Connecticut College	Nicholas Hernandez Nassau Community College	Thomas Puccio.....Molloy University
Kirsten Clarke.....Villanova	Breanna JeanMarie.....Hofstra University	Lucy Reardon Notre Dame
Ellie Clodfelter.....SUNY Geneseo	Isabelle Jocelyn.....Florida State University	Kelsie Reinholdt Notre Dame
Kerry Cody.....Michigan State	Ryan Kennedy.....University of Scranton	Jaylein Rodriguez Stony Brook University
Heather Cuevas.....Hofstra University	Ryan King.....Notre Dame	Dominic Rossiello Case Western Reserve
Ryan Curtis.....Wake Forest	Noah Leff.....University of Hartford	Maggie Russell.....Quinnipiac
Catherine Dolan.....Clemson University	Owen Lennon.....CUNY Brooklyn College	Antonio Salazar.....SUNY Purchase
Dakota Evans.....University at Buffalo	Sam Levy.....Virginia Tech	Sofia Shakham.....LIU Post
Megan Fay.....Villanova University	Maier, Luke.....Scranton	Natalia Skrodzki.....MIT
Erica Flaherty.....Wesleyan University	Marquardt, Paul.....Hofstra University	James Sullivan IV SUNY Cortland
John Frazier.....Rider University	McCarthy, Erin.....SUNY Cortland	Leann Truesdell.....Scranton
Dominick Fresco.....Adelphi University	McManus, Sydney.....Muhlenberg College	Allana Turner.....Temple University
James Giangregorio Temple University Boyer College of Music and Dance	Amauri Mezquita- Robinson.....Queensborough Community College	Alex Vargas.....Carnegie Mellon
		Sofia Vargas.....University of Virginia
		Kal Vasconez.....Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute



James Rakeman - SouthBrook Swim & Dive Team

NEWSIES IN SPORTS!

A Few of the Many Athletes in South Side’s Production Discuss the Experience of Participating in Both Activities

By Ryan Borruso

The cast members of South Side High School’s *Newsies* excel not only in theater but also in sports. A handful of these accomplished cast and crew members are student athletes as well. Assistant stage manager (ASM) James Rakeman recalled, “I fell in love with being a part of the stage crew and learning about the technical aspects of theater.” Rakeman is a student in South Side’s Play Production class and a captain of the Varsity SouthBrook Swim and Dive Team (South Side and Lynbrook). Fellow ASM William Barriocanal talked about how, early in his time at South Side, friends in the grades above him influenced him to join both the Swim and Dive Team and South Side’s Drama Guild. Joining both dedicated groups was difficult for these students, but despite the fact that the winter sports season overlaps with the beginning of rehearsals for the spring musical, Rakeman and Barriocanal were able to make it work.

In addition to dedicating the time necessary to ensure they keep up with their schoolwork, participants in both theater and sports manage rigorous schedules involving rehearsals and practices. Katherine Borruso (Morris Delancey), a key player on both South Side’s junior varsity soccer and basketball teams, stated, “I try to get as much schoolwork done during the school day as possible.” Borruso described her average day as hectic, running from school to rehearsal to practice, but finds the juggling act worthwhile. Helena Miller (Spot Conlon and Henry), a member of South Side’s varsity volleyball team and County Champion, added that performing in theater and playing a sport



Katherine Borruso - South Side junior varsity soccer team

are challenging in distinct ways. “I find theater so mentally draining but volleyball more physically draining,” she said. “Performing and training for a production is a lot. The goal in performance is much more indirect than a sport, making it mentally exhausting.” Miller emphasized, however, that these programs have equipped her with interdisciplinary skills to navigate both theater and sports. Moreover, she celebrates how inclusive and welcoming South Side’s theater program is, noting that she attempts to bring over those same values to her team. “Teamwork and collaboration are huge skills I’ve needed to utilize in both extracurriculars,” she said. “I also feel like I’m more in tune with everyone’s emotions from my time in the drama program.” Despite the intensity of balancing academics, athletics, and theater, these students have shown remarkable dedication, proving that passion and perseverance can bridge the gap between the stage and the field.

Upcoming Arts Dates and Events

- Tri-M Music Honor Society Annual Showcase**
Thursday, April 10,
South Side High School @ 7:00 PM

Intergenerational Sharing Conference
Wednesday, April 23,
South Side High School @ all day

Rockville Centre Education Fundraising Gala
Saturday April 26,
Gatsby on the Ocean @ 7:00 PM

National Art Honor Society Induction
Tuesday, April 29,
South Side High School @ 7:00 PM

South Side Middle School’s The Lion King
Friday, May 9,
South Side Middle School @ 4:00 PM

South Side Middle School’s The Lion King,
Saturday May 10,
South Side Middle School @ 7:00 PM

South Side Middle School’s 7th Grade Spring Concert
Tuesday, May 13,
South Side Middle School @ 7:00 PM

South Side Middle School’s 8th Grade Spring Concert
Monday, May 19,
South Side Middle School @ 7:00 PM
- South Side Middle School’s 6th Grade Spring Concert**
Wednesday, May 21,
South Side Middle School @ 7:00 PM

South Side High School’s Centre Stage Performance
Thursday, June 5,
South Side High School @ 4:30 PM

South Side High School’s Centre Stage Performance
Friday, June 6,
South Side High School @ 6:30 PM

South Side High School’s Spring Concert #1
Tuesday, June 10,
South Side High School @ 7:00 PM

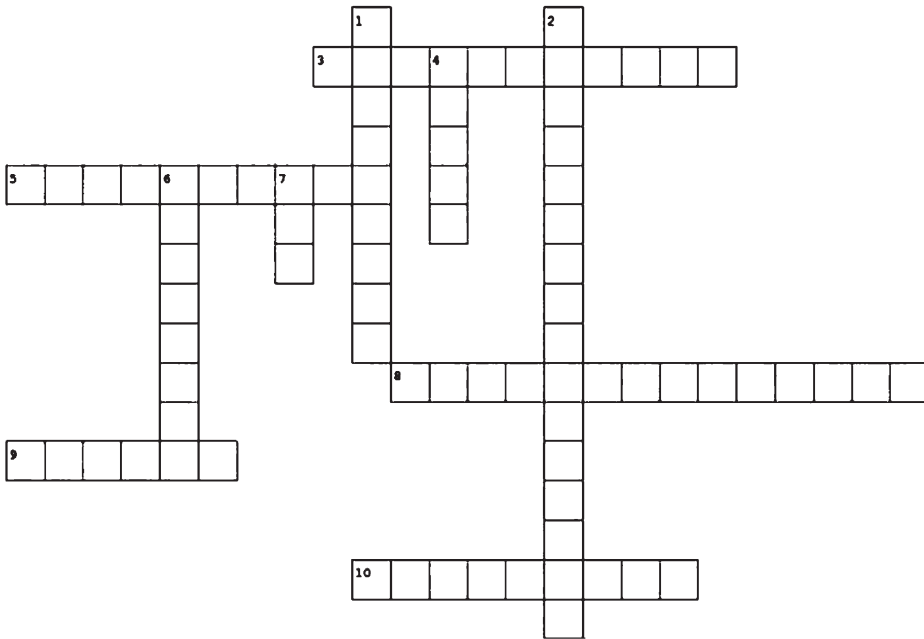
South Side High School’s Spring Concert #2
Wednesday, June 11,
South Side High School @ 7:00 PM

4th Grade Instrument Selection Night
Monday, June 16,
South Side Middle School @ 7:00 PM

South Side Alumni Concert
Tuesday, June 17,
South Side Middle School @ 7:00 PM

Name That Newsies Character!

Test Your Knowledge: How well do you know *Newsies*? Use the hints to name the character from the show.
Created by Ryan Borruso



- Across**
- 3. Inspired by vaudeville performer Aida Overton Walker in the stage version of the show, this big-voiced saloon singer and star of the Bowery offers her theater as a safe haven for the *newsies*.
 - 5. The proud leader of the Brooklyn *newsies*, boasts an intimidating reputation and a short singing solo in “Brooklyn’s Here”
 - 8. A pompous businessman through and through, this character owns the World and is concerned solely with the bottom line
 - 9. The crooked and sinister warden of the Refuge, a filthy and horrible orphanage, nicknamed “The Spider”
 - 10. The charismatic leader of the Manhattan *newsies*, yearning to leave the crowded streets of New York
- Down**
- 1. These tough brothers work at the distribution window for the World and take the side of the publishers in the strike
 - 2. Ambitious young reporter who works hard to make a name for herself as a legitimate journalist in a time when women aren’t taken seriously.
 - 4. A wise big brother who starts selling newspapers to help his family earn a living, but becomes swept up in the fervor of the strike
 - 6. A dedicated newsie with a disabled leg that’s painful, but helps sell more papers
 - 7. A cheeky younger brother, is inspired by the freedom of the *newsies* and loves their independent lifestyle