

CASTING

Known for its athletic choreography and invigorating score, *Newsies* requires a strong ensemble of actor-dancers who excel at creating characters through movement. All newsies, from ensemble to leads Jack and Davey, require dancing, so look for performers with endurance and the ability to maintain strong vocals while dancing. Beyond these movement- and vocals-heavy roles, *Newsies* offers a large cast of characters with plenty of opportunities for non-dancers to shine! Many are based on real people (see pp. 14-16 for more information). Below is a description of each character along with recommended audition material and vocal ranges. For ideas on how to double/understudy roles, see p. iii of the libretto.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

THE KIDS

All of these roles require dancing and solo singing except for Darcy and Bill (unless doubled as newsies). While, historically, as many as one in six newsies were between the ages of 5 and 10 years old, this musical generally presents them as teenagers and young adults.

JACK KELLY, the charismatic leader of the Manhattan newsies, is 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 strongly loyal, Jack isn't afraid to use his voice to attain better conditions for the working kids of New York City. Though living on the streets has given him a tough-guy exterior, Jack has a big heart and can demonstrate a sweet vulnerability – especially when it comes to bantering with a certain female reporter. Must have a great pop tenor voice and sense of physicality.

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, she boldly captures the voice of a new generation rising in her coverage of the newsies' strike. While she generally has no time for cocky, streetwise young men, she makes an exception for Jack Kelly. Though she only has a brief dance solo in "King of New York," Katherine should have a great contemporary pop voice with a high belt – diction is key.

CRUTCHIE is a dedicated newsie with a bum leg that's painful, but helps sell more papers. Though he walks with the assistance of a crutch, Crutchie doesn't let it define him; when in a jam, Jack Kelly's best friend relies on a goofy-sweet sense of humor and optimistic resilience. Crutchie is the heart of the resistance. Though his movement will suggest his bum leg, Crutchie should still be included in the dance numbers.

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, Davey is the brains of the resistance.

LES, Davey's cheeky younger brother, is inspired by the freedom of the newsies and loves their independent lifestyle. A precocious and natural newsie, Les is an intuitive salesboy and a pint-sized charmer. He should present as younger than the other newsies.

SPOT CONLON, the proud leader of the Brooklyn newsies, boasts an intimidating reputation and a short singing solo in "Brooklyn's Here."

NEWSIES, including **ALBERT, BUTTONS, ELMER, FINCH, HENRY, IKE, JO JO, MIKE, MUSH, RACE, ROMEO, SPECS, SPLASHER,** and **TOMMY BOY**, are some of the hard-working kids of New York City who go on strike for a livable wage.

SCABS are three newsies who are hesitant to join the strike.

DARCY, who can double as a newsie, is the upper-class kid of a publisher who sides with the newsies.

BILL, who can double as a newsie, is the son of William Randolph Hearst who joins the newsies' cause.

PHOTOGRAPHER takes the triumphant photo of the newsies at the end of "Seize the Day."

PULITZER & HIS STAFF

All of the below are non-dancing roles, and with the exception of Nunzio and the Guard, all sing in “The Bottom Line.”

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.

SEITZ, editor, advises Pulitzer, but ultimately admires the kids’ newspaper.

BUNSEN, Pulitzer’s bookkeeper, comes up with the idea to raise the newsies’ price per paper.

HANNAH is Pulitzer’s practical and insightful secretary.

NUNZIO is Pulitzer’s barber.

The **GUARD** removes the newsies from Pulitzer’s building.

NEWSPAPER DISTRIBUTORS & HEAVIES

Unless otherwise doubled with the newsies ensemble, these are all non-singing, non-dancing roles.

WIESEL, or “Weasel,” runs the distribution window for the *World* and knows most of the newsies by name. Assisted by the intimidating Delancey brothers, who keep order by any means necessary, Wiesel is Pulitzer’s disgruntled paper-pusher.

OSCAR & MORRIS DELANCEY, toughs who work at the distribution window for the *World*, take the side of the publishers in the strike and are known to use their fists to make a point.

GOONS assist the Delanceys in roughing up the newsies at the end of Act One.



MEDDA & THEATER EMPLOYEES

With the exception of the stage manager, these are singing and dancing roles.

MEDDA LARKIN, inspired by vaudeville performer Aida Overton Walker, this big-voiced saloon singer and star of the Bowery offers her theater as a safe haven for the newsies. An astute entertainer with great comic delivery, she’s a good friend to Jack and stands firmly behind the newsies in their fight for justice.

BOWERY BEAUTIES are female performers at Medda’s Theater.

STAGE MANAGER introduces Medda’s act.

OTHER ROLES

While the nuns sing, the others are all non-singing, non-dancing roles.

NUNS (3) offer breakfast to the hungry newsies. Feel free to cast additional nuns.

WOMAN is a newspaper customer.

MR. JACOBI allows the newsies to congregate in his restaurant to plan their strike – when he doesn’t have any paying customers, that is.

SNYDER, the crooked and sinister warden of The Refuge, a filthy and horrible orphanage, is concerned only with catching enough kids to keep his government checks coming.

POLICEMEN assist Snyder and turn against the newsies in the fight that concludes Act One.

The **MAYOR** of New York City rebuffs Pulitzer’s attempts to shut down the newsies’ strike.

GOVERNOR TEDDY ROOSEVELT, a well-respected lifelong public servant, inspires Jack to stand up to Pulitzer.