



STAGES: The Performing Arts Academy for Kids, is THRILLED to announce upcoming Auditions for an all-kids production of “ONCE ON THIS ISLAND” – the first-ever STAGES Fall Musical. The following information has been put together to help answer some questions that students and parents may have about the audition and production process – should you have any additional questions or concerns please contact Stacey Koloski in the STAGES Studio at (207) 510-6050, or via email at Stacey@stagesacademy.com.

THIS IS A LOT OF INFORMATION – PLEASE BEAR WITH US! ☺ If you are looking ONLY for Audition Information please scroll to the middle/end of this document.

We are greatly looking forward to working with the wonderfully talented kids and teens in our area as we work to put together our inaugural production!

ABOUT THE SHOW:

(all information taken from the ONCE ON THIS ISLAND (JUNIOR) Script, distributed by Music Theatre International)

“ONCE ON THIS ISLAND (JUNIOR)” is an exciting American musical with book and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and music by Stephen Flaherty. It is based on Rosa Guy’s novel “My Love, My Love,” which in turn was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid.” ONCE ON THIS ISLAND was originally directed by Graciela Daniele and was produced Off-Broadway by Playwrights Horizons to rave reviews during the 1989-90 season prior to moving to Broadway.

The story of ONCE ON THIS ISLAND is deceptively simple: a story of a peasant girl who has fallen in love above her class, told around a fire by a group of Caribbean peasants as they wait out a terrible storm. However, as the story unfolds, classic dramatic themes are exposed. Class distinction, racial prejudice, children pursuing their dreams despite their parents wishes, death, promises, and at the heart of the story, unrequited love, all combine to create a magical tale.

The music of the show brilliantly weaves themes heavily influenced by the instrumentation and rhythms of the Caribbean Islands. It should come as no surprise that a few years later Ahrens and Flaherty won the Tony Award for their work on the popular musical RAGTIME.

ONCE ON THIS ISLAND uses the tradition of storytelling to pass down history, values and insight from one generation to the next. The result is a lesson well told, to be passed along for generations to come.

The show is set on an unnamed island in the French Antilles, on the night of a violent tropical storm. As the storm rages outside, a group of peasants huddle together around a fire in a small hut. A young child cries out in fear at the lightning and thunder. The peasants seek to calm the child by acting out a story about the power of love. The story spans the course of the night, as the peasants spin their tale in nearly continuous song and dance. By the end of the night, the storm has subsided, the peasants have survived, and the little girl has learned the meaning of the story, and is capable of passing the story along to others.

ABOUT THE “JUNIOR” IN “ONCE IN THIS ISLAND –JUNIOR”

Music Theatre International (MTI) has a wonderful program called THE BROADWAY JUNIOR COLLECTION. MTI has taken time-honored musicals and worked with the authors, composers and rights-holders of the original material to come up with versions that are adapted specifically for productions featuring younger performers. In most cases this means the music is transposed into keys suitable for child and teen voices, and in some cases, more mature themes are somewhat smoothed over and adapted into more age-appropriate material for the performance.

THE STAGES PRODUCTION TEAM

Director/Musical Director: STACEY M. KOLOSKI

Co-Director/Vocal Coach: ALEXANDRA RICKOFF

Producer/Production Director: HOLLYE SEDDON

Production Designer: SIOBHAN BROWN

Choreographer, Accompanist, Orchestra Musicians, and other team members will be introduced at the Audition and first rehearsals.

ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

The following represents a list of the characters in ONCE ON THIS ISLAND, with brief descriptions following each:

PRINCIPAL ROLES

LITTLE GIRL/LITTLE TI MOUNE: the perfect role for a very young performer. Needs to be focused. Requires some singing with the ensemble.

STORYTELLERS 1-4: The four narrators of the story. Male or Female. The **most difficult roles in the show**. They sing the bulk of the show, tell the story, and focus the audience’s attention on important events throughout the production. **Excellent singers, with excellent attention spans.**

MAMA EURALIE: Ti Moune's adopted mother and the symbolic mother of us all. Married to Tonton Julian. Loving, practical, earthy. Nice voice, good actress.

TONTON JULIAN: Ti Moune's adopted father. Married to Mama Euralie. Strong, practical, supportive. Faced with the difficult decision of allowing Ti Moune to chase her dreams even if means he may never see her again. Nice voice, and strong actor.

TI MOUNE/PEASANT GIRL: Our romantic female ingenue and the focus of the story. In love with Daniel. Optimistic, Free Spirited. Featured in many solo songs and dances. Requires an *excellent* voice, *excellent* dance ability and a very strong acting ability. Ti Moune performs a pivotal dance solo in the show.

DANIEL BEAUXHOMME: Male ingénue. Wealthy, from a higher social class than Ti Moune. Strong actor, good singer, able to move well.

DANIEL'S SON: This is a very small but very important walk-on role at the end of the show. Will also be a member of the ensemble.

GATEKEEPER: Guards the gate of the Hotel Beaxhomme. Has one important and volatile scene with Tonton Julian. An impressive actor with a booming voice. Will also be a member of the ensemble.

DANIEL'S FATHER: Unsympathetic, not understanding of his son's wishes at all. Requires some singing and acting.

ANDREA: Andrea is the girl who was promised to Daniel when they were children. She is beautiful and refined and educated – the exact opposite of Ti Moune. She is also a sneering elitist. Must be a good actress and good singer.

PAPA GE: (Male) A god – self-described as the “Sly Demon of Death” – he is the closest thing to a “bad guy” in ONCE ON THIS ISLAND. Actor in this role needs a nice voice and be a good actor with an evil laugh.

ASAKA: (Female) The goddess of the Earth. Sings the most popular and fun song in the show. Must be an *Excellent* singer, must move well and be a wonderful actress who is fun to watch on the stage.

AGWE: (Male) The god of Water. He is mischievous and powerful. He has a solo early in the show that requires an *Excellent* voice.

ERZULIE: (Female) The goddess of Love. Triumphant, beautiful, and confident that love will always conquer death. A pretty singing voice and able to move well.

GOSSIPERS 1-7: Peasants and townspeople who gossip about the story as it moves along. Many featured lines and short solo lines in songs. Also members of the ensemble.

CHOIR OF STORYTELLERS, PEASANTS, VILLAGERS, GUESTS, GRANDS HOMMES: The ensemble – each person will have the opportunity to play many roles. Solo lines in songs and in dialogue scenes.

ABOUT THE FALL MUSICAL CLASS SERIES FEE:

The cost of the Fall Musical Series is \$300 per student.

As with all things at STAGES, the Fall Musical is an educational opportunity. Each student involved with the show will receive a script/textbook and highly personalized and intense instruction in many areas including, but not limited to, character development, acting, ensemble work, vocal coaching/lessons, production design and stagecraft, choreography, stage combat, and many many other aspects of musical theatre history and practice that are relevant to the themes in our production.

We estimate that there will be between 40 and 60 hours of rehearsal during our time together. Our production team professionals are committed to making sure that every student receives the same positive and enriching experience while involved with ONCE ON THIS ISLAND.

STAGES wishes to make the Fall Musical Fee schedule as efficient and affordable as possible. ALL students will have the opportunity to split their series fee into three monthly credit card installments.

ABOUT THE AUDITIONS:

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for ONCE ON THIS ISLAND – JUNIOR at STAGES: The Performing Arts Academy for Kids.

Auditions will be held on Saturday, September 8, 2007, in the STAGES Studio – located at 183 U.S. Route 1, Suite C in Scarborough. The phone number of the Studio is (207) 510-6050. There is plenty of on-site parking for auditionees and their parents/families. Auditions will be held on an “open call” basis from 1PM to 5PM. This means you can drop by the studio any time during that four-hour block for your audition. There may be a wait before you/your child gets to audition. There will be staff on hand to supervise the students waiting to audition.

EVERY STUDENT WHO AUDITIONS FOR ONCE ON THIS ISLAND WILL BE CAST IN THE ENSEMBLE. The Audition Process will allow us to meet the students individually, hear their voices and cast for the principal roles. Even if you/your child is not interested in a principal role, s/he still must audition so our production team can properly place them in the ensemble voice parts and roles.

Every Student will be required to prepare a song for their audition. This should be a short song – 1.5 minutes or less, preferably. ONCE ON THIS ISLAND is written/performed in a pop sensibility – so we prefer to hear a pop song, rather than a showtune. If you must sing a Broadway showtune, we simply ask that you sing it with a pop style voice – and not in a operatic or operetta-esque voice – if possible. You may sing a cappella (think “American Idol” auditions!) or with our rehearsal/audition accompanist.

If you choose to sing with our accompanist you must bring sheet music (loose sheets please, in order) already in the key you wish to audition in. Our accompanist will not be able to transpose on the spot for you.

If you choose to sing a cappella, our accompanist may ask you to sing some easy scales with the piano just so we can hear and judge your ability to follow the instrument's pitch.

Some students will be taught a short piece of music from the ONCE ON THIS ISLAND score.

Some students will be asked to read some dialogue bits.

Callbacks for Principal roles will be held on Tuesday evening, September 11, at 6:30PM.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT CALLBACKS:

If you are Called Back for a part, you may be asked to prepare a short song from the ONCE ON THIS ISLAND score.

You may be asked to sing, act, and or dance with other actors in the Callback.

You may be Called Back for multiple roles.

If you are not Called Back, it does NOT mean you aren't being considered for a principal role. It just means we do not need to see you again in order to make our decision.

FINAL CASTING:

Principals and Ensemble members will be notified of their roles on or before Friday, September 14th. You will be notified in a phone call from one of our senior production team members (either a director or a producer). You will have the opportunity to refuse the role you have been offered. If you refuse the role you have been offered, you will be placed in the ensemble. Final casting should be in place by Saturday afternoon September 15th. We will email a copy of the cast list to all participants with email addresses and post all final cast lists on the STAGESACADEMY.COM website for review.

First rehearsal will be on Tuesday, September 18, 2007 at 6:30PM.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE:

Rehearsals will begin on Tuesday September 18 and will run every Tuesday and Thursday from 6:30-8:30PM in the STAGES Studio. Beginning on October 13th, we will add a third rehearsal on Saturday afternoons from 11:15-12:30PM. Please reserve the entire week of November 12-16th for our final "tech" and "dress" rehearsals. The performances will be held on Friday November 16th, and Saturday November 17th at 8PM, and on Sunday afternoon the 18th at 2PM.

Not all students will be required to attend all Tuesday and Thursday rehearsals. A full and detailed rehearsal schedule will be distributed as early in the rehearsal process as possible.

STAGES does not wish to waste the valuable time of any student or their parents/families. If you are not required to be at a rehearsal we will let you know ahead of time.

If you expect to miss more than 4 rehearsals during the production process, please let us know at the Audition.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Should my audition song be something from ONCE ON THIS ISLAND?

A: It can. But we prefer you to sing a pop song in a pop/straight style just so we can hear your voice. You will have more than enough opportunities to sing ONCE ON THIS ISLAND songs for the next three months! 😊 LOL!

Q: What should I wear or bring to my audition?

A: Please wear comfortable clothes and appropriate footwear for moving around (no CROCS, no flip flops please). All you need to bring is your audition song, your enthusiasm and an open mind! 😊

Q: (for parents) Do I need to stay with my child at the Audition or Rehearsals?

A: You do not need to stay with your child at the Audition. In fact, STAGES general policy is that kids are more creative and uninhibited when their parents are not with them. We would prefer that you drop off your kids at the Audition and at all Rehearsals and pick them up at the end. All of our staff members are experienced teacher/educators and there will be ample supervision and instruction at all times when there are students in our Studio.

Q: \$300 seems expensive for my child to participate in a community musical. What's up?

A: STAGES is pleased to offer this musical theatre experience as part of our regular ongoing programming in our Studio. We differ from a community theatre production in that our production focuses solely on working with KIDS to create something wonderful and beautiful together. We are a professional studio, rather than a non-profit organization. We are not supported in any way by government or other grants or individual contributions. Every student has a wonderful and enriching experience.

Q: Tell me about the payment installment plan, please.

A: STAGES aims to make paying for the Fall Musical series fee as efficient and affordable as possible. All students and their families will be offered the opportunity to split the \$300 fee into three monthly installments. A \$100 deposit will be required at or before the audition on September 8th. You can choose at the Audition to settle the balance of the series, or to opt for the installment plan. STAGES will charge \$100 to your credit card automatically on the first of October and the first of November.

Q: How do I pay for the \$100 deposit?

A: There are three ways to pay for your \$100 deposit:

1. You can visit our website at www.stagesacademy.com, and click our class listings. Once there you should select the "ONCE ON THIS ISLAND"/Fall Musical course listing, and when you add it to your cart you can choose whether or not you want to pay just the \$100 deposit, or the whole \$300 fee at that time.
2. You can bring a check or credit card/debit card to the Audition and make the deposit (or entire amount if you choose) at the Audition. Checks should be made payable to STAGES, Inc.
3. You can stop by the Studio with a check or credit card, or call the Studio to enroll with a credit card any time.

Q: Where will the musical be performed?

A: We are in the final process of selecting a venue now, and will announce it very soon.

If you have any questions, please call Stacey or Hollye at the STAGES Studio at (207) 510-6050, or email to Stacey@stagesacademy.com.

Thank you so much for your interest in ONCE ON THIS ISLAND and STAGES and we look forward to working with you soon!