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ON CASTING ...

Casting is a tricky thing. When shows are cast, the director, music director, choreographer and assistant director have a zillion things they are taking into consideration. When we cast at PGT, we are looking for good auditions, directability, interesting and brave choices, positive energy, focus, a collaborative spirit, and a willingness to try, among other things. We try to challenge each actor. We work to give each actor an exciting creative experience, in the rehearsal process and in performance. We look at group dynamics. We look at age and gender groupings. We try to cast so that actors are in a group with old friends but are also making new friends. And, we cast to serve the show. As a theatre company, we are bound to serve the performance piece so that it succeeds as good theatre – that is one of our primary goals, as well as providing each actor with a successful experience within the show.

In a sense, casting is like putting together a giant puzzle. The actors who audition are the puzzle pieces. Our challenge is to move the puzzle pieces around until we fulfill the big picture and complete the puzzle to the best of our ability. It's not an easy task when you consider there are so many puzzle pieces to place! Faced with such a challenge, it becomes clear how important the audition is. The audition process can be a scary, nerve-wracking, arduous experience – we know this! But it is essential, as it is only through auditions that we can meet new actors and see how returning actors have grown....and WOW, have they grown!! We are all so proud! Knowing this, It is our hope that our young actors take the audition process seriously enough to come well prepared. We know auditioning isn't easy.

For every role, there are so many wonderful choices — all of which would be great – and different! -versions of these shows. Of course, this is why we can go to the theatre and see different casts do the same show many times. So many details to consider. So many options. Believe me, we move those puzzle pieces around fervently. There is much debate. There is a lot of oohing and aahing over how good our kids are!!! A lot of matching and moving and thinking and rethinking - trying out various combinations of actors...all of which make for very different shows. Casting is a long process filled with many possible endings.

What happens when there is more than just one “right one” for a role? What do you do when one actor may be “just right” for more than one role? What do you do when that is the case for many of the roles? We want everyone to be happy. Of course, this is not always the case. We realize that. We are actors, too. We have all been cast in smaller roles than we would have liked. We have all felt crushed when casting announcements were made. But we have also gone through the process of learning that there is much joy to be found, even in the smallest of roles. Though a character may only have two lines, the playwright wrote those two lines for that character for a reason—not just because—but because those two lines were important for that character to say in order to further the idea of the play. It really isn’t how big your part is—it’s what you do with the part you have in order to best serve the play. “There are no small parts, only small actors.” It’s true. You might be absolutely right for a certain part, you may want it more than you’ve ever wanted anything, you may even be sure you are going to get it – your friends may tell you that you are definitely going to get it – and then the part just might go to someone else. And that’s how it goes in casting. As an actor, you must be able to handle those disappointments graciously and learn to put your disappointment aside when it comes time to begin rehearsals.

At PGT, we have an additional factor which we consider when casting, and that is each actor's journey with us throughout the years. We do not cast each season as if it is our first, or an isolated experience – we cast knowing that each actor will sometimes get the role of their dreams, and sometimes not....each actor will sometimes play leading roles and each actor will sometimes be cast in the ensemble....each actor will, over their years with us, get cast in roles that make them jump in the air and scream with excitement, as well as roles that make them feel disappointed, even devastated. It is our hope that, in each actor's journey, those experiences balance one another, for all of those are part of the life of an actor, and the reality of auditioning.

It is also our hope that, as our actors move through their casting journey, they can remember back to those announcements that disappointed them in the past - and then turned out to be experiences that they count among their favorites.... and that they can take those memories forward with them, and use them to inform how they receive their casting as they grow. Unexpected news doesn't have to be disappointing news.

So, to all of our actors, thank you for having the courage to audition. Thank you for wanting to be a part of the theatre and the PGT family. Thank you for all being so right for so many roles in our show. And thank you for making such an amazing puzzle of our PGT Summer Show. The overall picture is beautiful, intriguing, interesting, colorful, new, inspiring. We are all excited to bring the picture to life!

Now we challenge you to breathe and talk and walk and sing and dance for these characters in ways that have never been tried. We offer you these parts...now we wonder what you will do with them....

Jill and the PGT Artistic Staff