

BWW Review: A CHRISTMAS STORY THE MUSICAL at Paper Mill is Holiday Magic for All

December 3

by [Marina Kennedy](#)



"Their job was to raise you. Your job was to let them."

-*A Christmas Story*

A Christmas Story: The Musical is everything a holiday show should be. It has a charming story, lots of heart, humor and the glitz and glamour that make it a musical theatre event. Based on the popular 1983 motion picture by the same name, it is now onstage at Paper Mill Playhouse through January 3rd. This exciting performance is a truly rewarding experience for people of all ages. The show enjoys excellent direction by Brandon Ivie, fascinating choreography by Mara

Newbery Greer and wonderful musical direction by Ben Whiteley. The book is by Joseph Robinette with music and lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul.

In the story, Ralphie wants only one item for Christmas, an Official Red Ryder Carbine-Action 200-shot Range Model Air Rifle. His mother tells him "You'll shoot your eye out" and the department store Santa Claus is too grouchy to even listen to his requests. With a series of mishaps at school and at home, you wonder if Ralphie's holiday dream can ever come true. The nostalgic view of boyhood, family life and holiday celebrations come together to make *A Christmas Story: The Musical* absolutely delightful.

The Paper Mill Playhouse's exceptional cast makes this heartwarming tale completely fun. Colton Maurer as Ralphie is a young talent with a great voice and plenty of charisma. Hudson Loverro shines as little brother, Randy. Elena Shaddow charms as Mother, pert and perky with a loving manner. Chris Hoch masters the role of The Old Man and brings a hearty dose of humor to the show with an ideal portrayal of the character's serious nature. Dannette Holden captures the role of Miss Shields, the grammar school teacher with plenty of pizzazz. Ted Koch is terrific as Jean Shepherd who narrates the show with both sensitivity and humor. The show's ensemble takes on multiple roles and includes a fantastic troupe of children. They will dazzle you with their talents.

The players also include pooches, Pete and Lily who play the Bumpus Hounds that just won't leave The Old Man alone. After being rescued in North Carolina, the two purebred bloodhounds were adopted by Animal Director and Trainer, William Berloni. Berloni also recruited them for the show's original Broadway production.

Song and dance numbers are inventive and compliment the production. Setting the stage is the grand opening number, "It All Comes Down to Christmas." Rousing pieces like "Ralphie to the Rescue!," "A Major Award," "You'll Shoot Your Eye Out" and "At Higbee's" are vibrant numbers that round out the score.

The design team has brought *A Christmas Story: The Musical* to life with scenic design by Walt Spangler, scenic coordination by Stephen Carmody, costume design by Elizabeth Hope Clancy, costume coordination and additional design by Leon Dobkowski, lighting design by F. Mitchell Dana, sound design by Randy Hansen, hair and wig design by Leah Loukas and Casting by Telsey + Company. The Production Stage Manager is Gary Mickelson.

A Christmas Story: The Musical is a universally appealing show. Gather your group and give some tickets to your friends as gifts. The show will be performed at Paper Mill Playhouse eight times a week, Wednesday through Sunday. Tickets are on sale now starting at \$29. Tickets may be purchased by calling 973.376.4343, at the Paper Mill Box office at 22 Brookside Drive in Millburn or online at www.PaperMill.org. Groups of 10 or more can receive a discount of up to 40% discount and should call 973.315.1680. College students can order \$20 rush tickets over the phone or in person at the Paper Mill Box Office on the day of the performance.

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