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ON CASTING ...

At PGT, we have many goals in our casting process. We want our students to be excited by new creative challenges, we seek to serve the show and each of the roles within the show well, and to create a dynamic and well balanced cast overall. We hope this letter helps to give you some context for the casting announcement your child is about to get, as well as some guidance on how to support your child as we head into rehearsals.

When we cast the show we are looking at the following:

- Skills. Who can play these parts? Who has the emotional depth – or the comedic timing? Who has the physical qualities that are needed for each part? Who has the range to sing it well? Who is right for which part?
- Age. Is there an age the role must be—young or old? Can we cast against that stipulation or do we need to adhere to it? Different parts require different ages. Older does not mean a better actor. Some of the younger students here are working at the same artistic level as our oldest students. We expect all ages to learn from each other. Some parts are not appropriate for younger kids, in which case they won't be cast in them. Some parts are not appropriate for older kids, in which case they won't be cast in them.
- Gender. Is there a gender requirement – does the role need to be played by a boy or a girl? Or can we mix it up and cast non-traditionally?
- Who needs to be challenged in a specific way and what challenge is each actor ready for in this moment? Some actors may play two leads in a row. Some actors may often be in the ensemble. We must do what's best for each individual actor, as well as what is best for the play as a whole. An actor may wish for a bigger role but if the requirements of that role are going to present challenges that the actor, at this point in her process, is not ready to tackle – on a stage, in front of an audience – we will find a role that will challenge, but not defeat that actor. It is our job in casting to always stretch our kids as far as we can - to challenge them as much as we can - without ever crossing the line into casting them in a role in which they will not be successful.
- The ensemble. Do these actors fit together—will they all work well together and will they sound or look right together.
- Type of role. Has an actor been primarily cast in the same type of role – a comedic role, or the villain – and do they need to have the experience of another type?

What to tell your children if they are upset because they didn't get cast in the role they wanted:

- Talk about what is good about how they were cast...a new challenge, a great director, friends in the cast. Find the *known* positive aspects of the casting and focus on those—the *unknown* positives will reveal themselves throughout the process.
- Discuss some of the information from above—and about the fact that there are many wonderful actors and fewer “big” roles. Great - truly great - actors/dancers/singers get cast in the ensemble every

single season. There simply aren't enough "big" parts for those who deserve them. That is the reality of the theatre. We hope that all of our actors will strive towards getting what they want – and then learn to love whatever role they are given.

- Remind them that just because they may not have gotten the role they wanted does not mean they weren't great or right for the role. There are many ways to cast every part....
- Speak with them about how they felt their auditions went. Talk about possibly preparing better or taking more creative risks the next time. Make sure they also think about what they did well at their audition – about what went well! Remind them that auditioning is a skill, and actors get better at it each time they do it!
- Emphasize that we look out for all the actors, no matter how big or small their role may be. Just because they don't have tons of lines does not mean they won't have plenty to do or that they won't have a great time during the process. We work to feature everyone in the result, but it is the process that is most important. Actors cannot possibly know based on casting what the process is going to be like – they have to experience it to know what it will actually be! And the truth is that the amount of fun an actor has in a show rarely has anything to do with the size of his part.

Our mission at PGT reaches beyond just putting up shows or creating good actors. We hope that the actors come away having a greater sense of themselves, and their place within their community. We hope they feel comfortable expressing themselves, and trust that their ideas are important and worthy of being heard. We hope they feel strong and brave enough to take risks on stage and in the world. We hope they can work well in an ensemble with humility, while retaining their sense of individualism. We hope they can learn from others, regardless of age, and respect them as creative beings. And when they hear the applause, along their life journeys, we hope they can take a moment to revel in their success, and then smile and thank their audience for supporting their efforts.

We hope this helps smooth out any bumps that could arise during casting time. We want everyone to have a great time here at PGT and to know that there is a method to our casting process, and that each and every student is given our thoughtful and careful attention throughout auditions, callbacks and casting.....not to mention the real fun part.....rehearsals!!!!

Jill and the PGT Artistic Staff