

to cherry

TREE

LANIE



We follow Eighth grader Izaiah Brees through his first production in the theater. Story by Sadie Weborg

The door to the auditorium swings open. Izaiah Brees (8) enters his first ever audition, and sits down next to his friends. He mentally repeats the lines to his audition song, 'Jolly Holiday' nervously. Charlotte Jones (8) calms his nerves. "You're going to do great," Jones said.

"Last names A-C, please," said fellow actor Lincoln Wicke (8) who was helping direct traffic. "Follow me to the hallway."

Brees stands. He stands in front of directors Holly Brinkman and Laurel Wicke. "I had really decided that I was going through with the audition the day of," said Brees.

Once he finished singing, he rejoined his friends in the audience, then moved to the stage for a quick dance combination, before auditions came to a close.

Two days later, at 8:45 PM, the cast list was posted. Izaiah was cast as Bert, one of the biggest male roles in the show. His friends bombarded him at lunch the next day.

"YOU GOT BERT!" Blake Anderson (8) yelled as the group sat down at their usual table.

"I KNOW!" Brees replied. Everyone cheered. Everyone was surprised, including Brees himself. Getting the lead role in the show after your first audition is a rare instance in the theater world.

"I was totally surprised, he had never been on my radar at all. He just came in and blew me away," said head director Mrs. Laurel Wicke.

His nerves were finally calm for a few weeks, until Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious dance lessons. In this song, performed in Mrs. Corey's Talking Shop,

Bert leads a group of dancers through spelling out the word with actions, made to look as though they were made up on the spot. Even actors with a lot of dance experience struggled.

"It was so confusing," said Hana Hatley (8). Nola Guinan (7) agreed. "It was so crowded I couldn't even see half of the time."

Although difficult for everyone, for some there was an option to opt out of the dancing. Brees however, did not have a choice. "I HATED that song until a few rehearsals went by," said Brees.

Izaiah then 'breezed' through six weeks of rehearsals, leveling up his energy and his confidence before the part this was all for... Opening Night. "I'm so pumped to finally show everyone what we've been working on since December," said Brees.

CHIMNEY SWEEPS

Some 'Practically Perfect' facts about a few cast members and their characters.



Name: Riley Bearss (8)
Character: Mary Poppins
Experience: "I loved playing Mary because she's a character that seemed very firm with the children at first, but you can tell that she really loves them, and it was cool to see her character really develop throughout the show," Bearss said.



Name: Gora Nichols (7)
Character: Mrs. Andrew
Experience: "Being Mrs. Andrew was great because she's so mean, and I'm really not, so it was fun to have a different personality than I'm used to," Nichols said.



Name: Nolan Mielke (7)
Character: Neleus
Experience: "I liked being Neleus because of one thing: he's crazy, and I'm crazy. It was fun to see parts of myself really included in his character," Mielke said.



Name: Bailey Williams (7)
Character: Ensemble
Experience: "Ensemble was a very fun role for me being able to portray multiple people at once in different themes throughout, and I got a lot of stage time which was a plus," Williams said.



SIBLINGS. Oliver Nations (7) and Mara Stevens (6) play children Michael and Jane during a rehearsal. "Coming to rehearsal every day was a gift. Not only did I get to do what I loved but I also got to do it with our wonderful cast," Stevens said.



S-U-P-E-R. Melina Rix (7), slides between Isaiah Brees (8) and Riley Bearss (8) for the finale of Act 1, "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious." When asked about the best part of the show, Rix said, "The best part has been watching everyone begin to work together and form new friendships to help make the show come together."



A JAUNTY SAUNTER! At the end of the song "Jolly Holiday", Annie Erwin (8), as Mary, and the whole cast strike a pose. Erwin had a successful quick change during this number, which took two other people to help her get it done.

ROLLING THE DICE. Before they begin to dance during "Jolly Holiday," Nola Guinan (7), Abigail Hopkins (7) and Scarlett Zamora (7) pretend to play games in the park. For Zamora, some of the most interesting moments happened offstage. "The funniest thing that happened was when we all had to be silent backstage, and it turned into a silent movie. At one point, we all acted out our deaths, and you would just see a bunch of people on the ground." **BUSY BEES.** Dressed as magic bees, Kylie Zufall (7), Emma Drumm, and Julia Richie dance around a knocked out Robertson Aye played by August Stevens (7).



SHE'S BRILL-IANT

Bailey Noall (8) discusses playing the role of Mrs. Brill in *Mary Poppins*.



When Bailey Noall (8) was cast in the role of Mrs. Brill, one of her top choices, she was ecstatic. Not only was it going to be her stage persona, the character met her offstage personality. "She loves to use sarcasm and so do I, so I can relate to her," said Noall.