



## Two Millburn residents to star in 'Grinch' musical

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Township resident Aviva Winick, 7, bottom row seventh from left, the youngest actress cast for Dr. Seuss's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical," which is touring around the United States through November and December.

Holidays like Christmas aren't always about getting presents.

But the Grinch thinks they are until Cindy Lou Who teaches him about the true meaning of Christmas, which is to act kind to others.

Many individuals may remember Cindy Lou Who for her innocence in the Dr. Seuss book and television program "How The Grinch Stole Christmas!" Cindy has a vibrant and upbeat personality with a touch of an officious side. She isn't afraid to ask the Grinch why he is stealing the presents from her home in Whoville or to tell him that he should spend Christmas with her.

Township residents Aviva Winick, 7, and Presley Ryan, 10, both said they can relate to her personality. And both girls will play Cindy Lou Who this holiday season in the 2014 Broadway National Tour of Dr. Seuss's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical," but on different tours for the show.

Aviva will star as Cindy in the show's tour to nine cities in 9 1/2 weeks. Already she has traveled to Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Okla., Springfield, Mo., and Albuquerque, N.M. Other cities on her tour include Salt Lake City, Utah, Spokane and Seattle, Wash., Costa Mesa, Calif., and Denver, Colo. Aviva, according to her mother Rachel, is the youngest actress ever cast for the "Grinch" shows.

The tour Presley is on is traveling to Birmingham, Ala., Chicago, Ill., and New York, N.Y. In New York City, performances will be held at Madison Square Garden, 4 Pennsylvania Plaza, New York, N.Y., from Friday, Dec. 5 to Sunday, Dec. 28.

"Cindy Lou Who is a really sweet girl and she tries to help the Grinch," said Presley. "The show is really fun because she is such a positive character and stands up for what she believes in."



PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESLEY RYAN

Presley Ryan, 10, right, also from the township, gets a greeting from the Grinch during a rehearsal from "How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical." Presley, like Aviva, is also in the show, but on a different tour as her.

Both Presley and Aviva tell the Grinch not to spend Christmas alone but rather to spend the holiday with them in the song "Santa for a Day." They sing "Santa for a Day" during the scene when the Grinch attempts to steal all the presents from Cindy's house, but tells her he is taking them to the North Pole.

Everybody in the audience laughs toward the end of the song, Aviva explained, because the Grinch waves his hand and tries not to get emotional.

Another scene Presley and Aviva enjoy playing in is Whatchamawho because they get to ride on the stage on top of a huge drum.

Sometimes it's hard to roll the drum out on stage because of its large size, noted Aviva, as she described some of the challenges that come with acting in the show. She said pretending to cry is another challenge.

"It isn't easy to do," Aviva said, explaining that she looks down at the stage when playing scenes where Cindy Lou Who cries.

Presley has found wearing Cindy Lou Who's clown shoes to be tricky.

"They are really heavy and extend 6 inches past my toes," Presley noted. "I'm fine with them now, but it was challenging to learn how to walk and dance in them."

"The Grinch" has more dancing scenes in it and is being performed in front of larger audiences than what the two actresses from town are used to. The stage at Madison Square Garden seats more than 5,000 people, explained Presley, noting that she is excited to perform in front of such a large number of viewers.

Previously Presley has played in "Beaches," as Young Cee Cee at Virginia's Signature Theatre. Last year, she was an understudy for Marta and Brigitta von Trapp in NBC's "The Sound of Music: Live." She also starred in the off-Broadway tour of "Freckleface Strawberry," which had performances in Montclair, Manhattan and New Brunswick and she sang in the children's choir for "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," at the Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown.

Working with a combination of adult and children actors is another difference between acting in "The Grinch" and other shows she's been in.

As for Aviva, she too is experiencing acting in front of large audiences, traveling with a show for the first time, and acting with cast members who are much older than her.

Aviva admires many of the cast members, her school principal Kelly Salazar and teacher Donna Tucci, both from Deerfield School. The experience has been fun for her but she is in her comfort zone, according to her mother Rachel.

When Aviva is not acting she gets to explore the cities she is visiting for the show. She has visited an air and space museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma and last week a cupcake shop in Oklahoma City.

"Each town offers something unique and special. Next stop, Albuquerque!" Rachel exclaimed.



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