



# SCHOOL OF ROCK

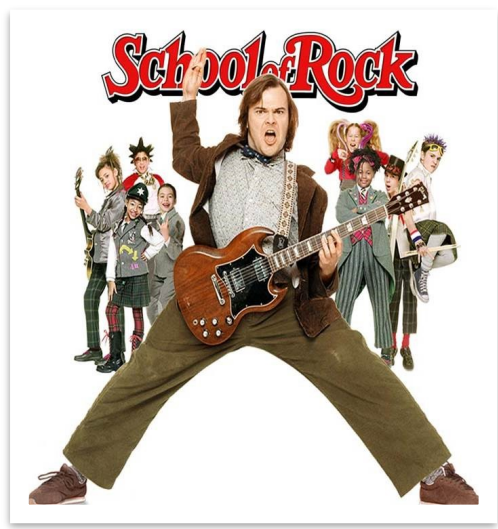
NOVEMBER 17- DECEMBER 30, 2023

Based on the Paramount movie by Mike White

Book by Julian Fellowes  
Lyrics by Glenn Slater  
New Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber  
Choreographed by Tori Watson  
Music Direction by David Bonfiglio  
Directed by Skylight Music Theatre's Artistic Director Michael Unger

## School of Rock: Movie Turned Broadway Hit

The 2003 film *School of Rock* starring Jack Black quickly became a beloved classic, captivating audiences with its infectious energy, hilarious performances, and rock 'n' roll spirit. However, the magic didn't stop there. In a truly remarkable transition, *School of Rock* made its way from the silver screen to the grand stage of Broadway, delivering a dynamic and electrifying musical adaptation that has captivated theatergoers around the world.



Directed by Richard Linklater, produced by Scott Rudin, and written by Mike White, the original film stars Jack Black, Joan Cusack, Mike White, and Sarah Silverman. As in the musical, the movie follows struggling rock guitarist Dewey Finn, who is fired from his band and subsequently poses as a substitute teacher at a prestigious prep school. After witnessing the musical talent of the students, Dewey forms a band of his students to attempt to win the upcoming Battle of the Bands and use his winnings to pay his rent. The film received positive reviews from critics, with praise for Black's performance and humor. It was the highest-grossing music-themed comedy of all time until 2015.

Many rock music fans are familiar with the legacy of The Langley Schools Music Project, an acclaimed collection featuring children's choirs from the '70s singing covers of songs by Paul McCartney, David Bowie, the Beach Boys, and others, which was rereleased in 2001. As revealed in a 2003 interview with Jack Black, *School of Rock* screenwriter Mike White "loosely" based the film's script on the project, inspired by the concept of a teacher showing rock music to elementary schoolers. "I thought that was an amazing idea," Black said.

As in the musical production, all of the young performers played the instruments in the movie.

In April 2013, Andrew Lloyd Webber purchased the stage rights to the film and began planning the musical adaptation. In December of 2015, the musical made its world premiere on Broadway. This would be the first time since *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 1971 that a Lloyd Webber musical would premiere on Broadway rather than in the West End. It would also mark a return for the composer to the Winter Garden Theatre, where his *Cats* ran for 18 years.



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You will see some of our young performers asking for donations as you exit the theatre. All proceeds go to the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee. We hope you will consider giving whatever you are able this holiday season to support this meaningful, local, non-profit organization.



# The Kids of *School of Rock*

Artistic Director and *School of Rock* director, Michael Unger, sat down to chat with the sixteen, talented young performers of the *School of Rock* cast. Here's what they had to say.

## Kaylee Anderson



**Age:** 14

**Role:** Ensemble/Tomika Understudy

People should come see this show because it's very exciting and you get to see students show their true sides – that's the beauty of the show. The message of the show is that you shouldn't be afraid to show what you love. Even if your parents might not approve of it, it's okay to show them sides of you that they've never seen. All of our characters change through the show. Onstage we really get together as family and friends.

## Kyla Anderson



**Age:** 14

**Role:** Tomika

The reason people should see *School of Rock* is because Dewey comes into the students' lives and helps them express how they truly are. He fixes them. The show will help you by giving you ideas that you can do things in a respectful way, follow the rules, and still express yourself. The message of the show is to be who you want to be and not let others control you. It's good to respect your parents or your guardian, but if they are forcing you to be someone you are not, you should tell them who you really are. My character is like me – she is a very shy person. Depending on who I am around, I am sometimes very quiet. Once I'm around someone I'm close with – I'm a whole different person. Towards the end of the show, Tomika is more open and knows how to speak for herself.

## Bristol Beasley



**Age:** 13

**Role:** Sophie

*School of Rock* is a unique musical. It is about kids truly finding out who they are. I think my character is a lot like me because we both like to sing and dance. All of the students are very doubtful of Dewey when he first comes in. We don't think we are going to like rock music. But he gives us a chance to discover who we are and helps us prove to our parents who we are.

## Malia Brunner

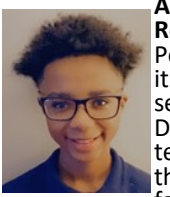


**Age:** 10

**Role:** Lauren (Keyboards)

This is a funny show and it's for everybody and it has a good lesson of how everyone changes. My character is like me at the end of the show but not as much in the beginning because Lauren is shy and doesn't really talk to anybody. Dewey convinces her that she's cool. And cool can mean different things to different people. I think cool can mean confidence.

## Jeremiah Cooper



**Age:** 12

**Role:** James

People should come to see *School of Rock* because it has a good message that you can do anything you set your mind to. At first, my character is very shy. Doesn't really talk to anyone. He's sort of a teacher's pet. He ends up becoming a security of this big group and becomes more confident. My favorite part about being in the show is that I can make new friends and I can be a security figure of some kind.



## Mac Heinrich

**Age:** 10

**Role:** Ensemble/Freddy Understudy

I think this show is very entertaining and has a great message. Parents should not try to force the future on their kids and kids should have some say in it. I make my ensemble role mostly just me. Freddy is very different from me. He's more of a troublemaker and more rebellious. In the beginning of the show the kids are a little more goody-two-shoes and do what people say. By the end they are a little more rebellious and kind of do what they want. My favorite part about being in the show is how it brings people together. And also I think everybody here is an amazing actor and musician.

## Emily Honigman



**Age:** 12

**Role:** Marcy

People should come see this show because it has a really good influence on people and shows that everyone can say their opinions. The message of the show is how you should follow your passion. I like that my character is a singer. We are similar that way. She starts out being quiet – and I'm not that quiet compared to her. I think my character grows in confidence over the through the story.

## Emilia Kosek

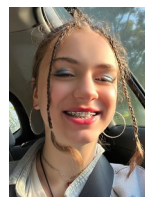


**Age:** 10

**Role:** Summer

This is a really great show because it shows that if you don't think you can do something just because people tell you not to do it or that it doesn't fit you, maybe you CAN do it. My character is like me because she is bossy (but nice), we are both great students and we look forward to getting straight A's. At the beginning she likes her school and stays on track with the school but as Dewey teaches her that rock can be in everyone she loosens up and learns to get it all out. My favorite part of being in the show is getting the experience of being on that stage and seeing everybody in the crowd having a great time.

## Meryl Lueder

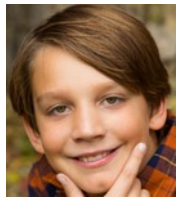


**Age:** 13

**Role:** Mason

People should see this play because it's an influential play about how kids' opinions matter. You should listen to your parents, but if they are forcing you to do something you don't want to do that can put a lot of pressure on you. Dewey is the first person to really listen to these kids. He comes in and seems to know me in a way I don't know myself. It's beautiful because music can bloom happiness, it can bloom sadness, it can create so much emotion. I think that rock really brings out this power and pride and energy... and good vibe. There are a few scenes where I find myself very much relating to Mason. But there are other scenes where I don't. I'm not a very tech-y person. I don't know lighting. I'm more of an onstage actress. But the scene with Rosalie is very fitting to me. It's amazing.

**Joseph Maxwell**



**Age:** 9

**Role:** Billy

This show has a really great message – sometimes you have to make people be able to hear you to show that what you have to say is important. My character is very confident – I’m into fashion because my mom is in the fashion business.

**Annalise Nordstrom**



**Age:** 10

**Role:** Katie (Bass)

People should see this show because it is so AWESOME! They are all such good actors we really pull it off well. The story is so entertaining. It teaches you a lesson. My character learns to be more outgoing and to tell her parents to listen to her better. Even though that’s not in the script for my character, I imagine that. My character is different from me because, first, she goes to a private prep school, but she is more classical and quiet than me. My favorite part about being in the show is meeting all these great people.

**Natalie Ortega**



**Age:** 15

**Role:** Shonelle

People should see this show because it's a really light-hearted show and I think that's what we need in this time of darkness. As the world is still recovering from the pandemic and everything that's going on, I think it's a really good distraction that people could really use. It shows that we should stop silencing the younger generation because they are the future. I mean, every younger generation grows up to be the older generation. My character starts very quiet, sitting in the back, minding her own business; but then she starts making friends and getting more open-minded about the world – she starts opening up to everyone around her. Being in the show has made me realize that I want to be taken more seriously as a younger person.

**Azure Schroeder**



**Age:** 14

**Role:** Freddy (Drums)

The story will make people laugh and feel good. We are actually a really good band - and we're kids. We have worked so hard together. The message of the show is about belonging. Before Dewey enters, there are just a lot of empty kids and empty adults that have a lot of expectations, but they find themselves and each other. Freddy and I are so much alike - we both play the drums and are pretty cool guys. Of course, Freddy is a little naughtier than me ;). My favorite part of the show is the people. We have so much fun, but when it is time to work everyone works so hard to make this the best show ever.

**Elias Totleben**



**Age:** 11

**Role:** Zack (Guitar)

Anyone who’s anyone can enjoy this show. And the world is a little screwed up right now so I think it’s important to see the show. The message of the show is that parents should start listening to their kids. Sometimes parents don’t respect “kids” ideas. This generation is going to change the world someday. I am very similar to my character. A big difference is that his mom doesn’t listen to him – mine does listen to me. The journey Zack takes is that through Dewey Finn he learns that rock can set him free – and that’s how he gets through to his mom.

**Jillian Vogedes**



**Age:** 9

**Role:** Ensemble/ Summer Understudy

People should see this show because it’s a fun show and I think it can inspire people to change. Playing an ensemble member, my character is just like me – the character can be anything I want it to be. My character changes because she starts as someone who follows the rules at a strict prep school but in the end, she loosens up and gets more freedom.

**Ellory Woodford**



**Age:** 10

**Role:** Madison

This show has a really great message and it’s a really great show. We are an amazing cast. The message is that kids have voices too. Kids know things that adults don’t always know. The parents at Horace Green don’t listen to their children at all. I think that’s a big problem. That happens too often in this world. So parents should listen to their children. My character is very similar to me because she likes to sing and dance. She’s also a 10-year-old girl who goes to school and has friends; and that’s pretty much me. My character changes through the show because she starts out shy but in the middle of the show Dewey has helped her grow a lot. This has been my favorite show since I started doing theatre when I was eight. So just being in this show! I like the music and the people in the show are so nice and so talented.



# WORD SEARCH

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Keyboard  
Guitar  
Drums

Bass  
Singer  
Rock

Music  
Band  
Teacher

Principal  
Horace Green  
School