

## COVER STORY

BY JAY BOBBIN

# Fox stages musical 'A Christmas Story' live

Ralphie sings! However, we make no guarantees about the leg lamp.

The 1983 movie version of "A Christmas Story" will have its traditional Christmas Eve and Day marathon on TBS again, but Fox also gets into the triple-dog-dare game this year by airing the stage-musical edition as "A Christmas Story Live!" Sunday, Dec. 17. Familiar faces including Matthew Broderick, Maya Rudolph and Ana Gasteyer will join young newcomer Andy Walken, the winner of a national search to fill the role of Ralphie — who desperately wants to find a Red Ryder BB gun under his family's holiday tree.

"You'll never feel for one moment that you're in a theater watching a musical," promises executive producer Marc Platt ("Grease Live!," "La La Land"). "You will be living the life of Ralphie. You'll be experiencing his fantasies. You'll be living the life of this community, this town. There's lights. There's snow. If you know the movie, there are dogs which appear. It's live TV, (so) there will be live animals all over the place. You can't ask for more: tap-dancing kids, live dogs, snow and Christmas, all in one night."

The music for "A Christmas Story Live!" falls to Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, who have created several new songs beyond the ones featured in the stage show that has had national tours and a Broadway run. The composers are wrapping up quite a year, having won Oscars for "La La Land" and Tony Awards for "Dear Evan Hansen."

"Something that's so amazing about 'A Christmas Story,'" Pasek reflects, "is that audiences have such an expectation coming in to see the show. They know the movie back-and-forth. They know every scene that they're excited to come in and see, and how we're going to be able to imagine it on stage ... and, here, how we're going to be able to imagine it in a live TV event."

## 'A Christmas Story' behind the story

Jack Nicholson was almost cast to play Ralphie's dad in the original 1983 movie but the role instead went to Darren McGavin due to Nicholson's salary command and the movie's lack of budget. Tune in to the annual marathon to get your fix of "You'll shoot your eye out!" We "double-DOG- dare ya!"

Watch on TNT & TBS Dec. 24 8p; 10p; Dec. 25 12a; 2a; 4a; 6a; 8a; 10a; 12p; 2p; 4p; 6p