

## “Annie” is Back in Tampa

By Rory Crump August 19,2011

**Director Doug Wall and the New Tampa Players rule the community stage, making a big production of the classic musical “Annie.”**

Doug Wall, director of the “Annie” production running this weekend at the [University Area Community Center](#), labored all summer chiseling and crafting his cast to achieve a deft take on the classic musical.

But for Wall, the work is a labor of love. He is the founding artistic director for the [New Tampa Players theater group](#) and whether acting or directing, he is a true ambassador of community theater - driving the concept on and off the stage. And never forgetting the “community” part, Wall heaps praise on his behind-the-scenes peers making sacrifices for the love of the art.

“Annie” provided the perfect script to test his New Tampa Players’ vision for developing young talent and bringing theater arts to a wider audience. Kids comprise approximately 50 percent of the cast, and Wall savored the opportunity to help mentor so many precocious actors.

Wall calls New Tampa Players a gypsy group, roaming from stage to stage, entertaining Tampa with local talent and packing a suitcase membership. But the vagabond collective – with approval from the county and a boost from donors - may soon find a permanent home near Hunter’s Green.

Wall hopes to leverage the home theater into more workshops, classes, productions and members. Wall recently shared his passion, vision and “Annie” with New Tampa Patch.

**Q: “Annie” opened last weekend. How were the first performances?**

A: The first weekend was incredible. The kids are extremely talented, and I’ve had a blast directing this show.

**Q: What about Annie? What can we expect from her?**

A: Annie is Miranda Wolf from Sarasota. Incredibly talented, most likely Broadway bound. She has the passion and the talent. Her family is supportive of her passion.

**Q: Talk more about the future home of New Tampa Players.**

A: We're all about the kids. Having our own home will allow us to have that place for the kids. That has always been a goal of New Tampa Players...to have a very strong youth division.

**Q: With so many kids in your "Annie" cast, how does that impact your director's role?**

A: I've always wanted to help kids with their theater experience. This is the type of show to help the kids realize their potential on stage.

**Q: How big is the NTP membership?**

When someone joins a production they become a member. But with our own theater, we'll be able to sell season tickets ... first right of refusal. And our membership will increase. It's easier to have shows in our own backyard.

**Q: What about your career? When did you start acting?**

A: I've been performing since I was 11 years old. I got into it for the girls, but then discovered my love for the stage. Leaving college I got a real job, but never lost my love for theater.

**Q: What makes your "Annie" different?**

A: Words and music may be the same, but our choreography is going to be much different than if you see the show somewhere else. And each director sees things differently. I try to bring out the most in a musical comedy.

