



Dreams Come True: Caitlin Ehlinger chats about 42nd Street

Liza Mitchell

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Event: 42nd Street**Venue: Times-Union Center's Moran Theatre****Date: Jan 12-17****Tickets: \$38.50-78.50****Contact: www.fscjartistseries.org**

Growing up in Houston, [Caitlin Ehlinger](#) dreamed of one day performing in a national tour under the direction of renowned choreographer Randy Skinner. When she moved to New York to pursue her dancing career, her dreams came true. Ehlinger mirrors her character, the hungry young dancer Peggy Sawyer, in the musical comedy [42nd Street](#). Based on a novel by Bradford Ropes and Busby Berkeley's 1933 movie, the production tells the story of Sawyer who leaves her Allentown home and comes to New York to audition for the new

Broadway musical *Pretty Lady*. When the lead breaks her ankle, Peggy takes over and becomes a star.

The quintessential backstage classic *42nd Street* celebrates a week-long run Jan 12-17 at the Times-Union Center's Moran Theater (www.fscjartistseries.org). The production is directed by co-author Mark Bramble and choreographed by Randy Skinner, the team who staged the 2001 Tony Award winning Best Revival.

42nd Street is the song and dance fable of Broadway, featuring the timeless songs 'We're In The Money', 'Lullaby of Broadway', 'Shuffle Off To Buffalo', 'Dames', 'I Only Have Eyes For You', and, of course, '42nd Street'.

"I was familiar with the show but I hadn't seen it. It was really up until the audition notice went out that I knew I really needed to research and see the show and get to know it," says Ehlinger. "I worked with Randy Skinner when I first came to New York and so I knew that it was a dream role. I don't think you could get better than this. It's amazing." During the opening number, Ehlinger is mesmerized by the power of the performance and the energy of the audience before taking the stage. "It's incredible. The entire ensemble is dancing and it really just sets the stage for the show," she says. "It's exciting because I get to watch them and hear the audience erupt. They are all so talented. It feels good before I even get on stage to hear how much they enjoy it. It sets the tone for the rest of the show." As a child, Ehlinger studied dance at the Suzanne Semans Studio and it soon became her home away from home. At the age of ten she was invited by Semans to join her studio's annual summer trip to New York City. The trip included private lessons, classes at Broadway Dance Center, Steps, and Alvin Ailey as well as a baptism of Broadway shows. Throughout high school, Ehlinger spent most of her school holidays taking classes in New York. During her senior year, she planned to move to New York City to begin a gap year (or two) of training and auditions. In February 2015, she convinced her parents to fly her back to the Big Apple to audition at the open call for *42nd Street*. She had a great sales pitch, her dream to postpone college and dance for Randy Skinner in a national tour. Ehlinger was cast in the lead role.

“My favorite number is ‘Plenty of Money’ which is Peggy’s big moment to shine and prove that she can do it and take over this role,” she says. “I get to dance with all the boys in the ensemble. It’s a lot of fun as things become sassier and sexier.” Ehlinger is every bit the consummate performer. She arrives at least two hours before the show to warm up her vocals and prepare her body for the physically demanding role. It’s also the time she needs to get into character. “I love getting to become that character every night. It’s rewarding because you realize how much work you’ve put into getting to that moment,” Ehlinger says.

As part of this vibrant, 38-member cast, Ehlinger is excited to share Peggy’s story – and, in part, her own – with audiences night after night. “Everyone has something they connect to in the story. Like Peggy’s path, I think that everyone has some kind of dream and some people get lucky and get to do just that. Peggy gets lucky that she gets that opportunity to step up and be a lead and it’s amazing because she does succeed and do well, and the show does go on. It’s such a feel good show. I can’t imagine someone sitting in the audience and not enjoying themselves. The music is so familiar and the songs take you back to old memories or for those who have never seen it before, make new ones.” Catch Ehlinger in 42nd Street January 12-17 at the Times-Union Center’s Moran Theatre.
