

Peel

11.22.77

Pat Ryan Big Bk

# Mandy Morrison at nine years of age; she is already a showbusiness veteran

Oct. 5 '77  
HN

By PAT ZAMPERIN

There's a song in the stage play *Gypsy* which could well apply to nine-year-old singer, dancer and actress Mandy Morrison of Mississauga.

The lyrics, sung lustily by a group of bumping, grinding strippers advise one and all: "you gotta get a gimmick . . . you gotta be more than just a mimic . . . 'cause when you got a gimmick . . . you too can be a star".

Unless Morrison, a talented veteran of stage, radio and television commercials, as well as numerous CBC dramatic presentations gets a gimmick, and soon, her agent says she will be forced to go to the United States.

**"It's too bad she can't progress here but there just aren't enough young female roles in Canada."**

"It's too bad she can't progress here," Pam Friendly of GKO Associates in Toronto says, "but there just aren't enough young female roles in Canada.

"But there are lots of kids' feature films being done in New York and Los Angeles. We just don't have the writers or the scripts, at least none with juicy parts," she says.

And this comes from an agent who swore she would never again handle children as clients.

"I just got so sick and tired of showbusiness mothers and the kids always acting up, missing their lessons and getting poor grades in school. I only took on Mandy as a favor in the beginning . . . but now I've come to realize just how special and rare she is."

**She's been dancing, singing and acting since she was four. She's now nine years old.**

At nine years of age, Mandy is already a showbusiness veteran. The grade five pupil at St. Catherine of Siena School has been dancing, singing and acting, "all together," since she was four and a half years old.

She is a member of ACTRA and Equity, and has recently appeared in *Gypsy* (the youngest actress ever to play Baby June) at the Neptune Theatre in Halifax, and in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, directed by Kurt Reis, at the St. Lawrence Centre.

Her CBC accomplishments list *Catsplay*, directed by Stephen Katz and *The House on Front Street* among many others.

Television commercials also fall within Morrison's scope.

In her career thus far she has appeared in advertisements for *Moist 'N Easy*, *Hawaiian Punch*, *Taster's Choice* (co-starring with Lorne Greene), and *MacIntosh Toffee* ("I ate all that toffee and I didn't get one cavity").

In a recent commercial for a peanut butter product there were nearly 80 children auditioning for eight parts; Mandy got one of them.

"Mainly you just do what they tell you," she explains. "You read a script, and they'll tell you to do it with feeling or plain, or they'll tell you to be yourself . . . sometimes you're SOC (silent on screen).

"Sometimes when you're auditioning they'll ask you which brand name of a product you buy . . . I mean, if you're smart at all, what are you going to say?"

Morrison's worldliness doubtless stems in part from her exposure to various characters in the stage and television plays she has appeared in.

In "Six Characters", where she played a four-year-old, Morrison had a brother who shot himself, a sister who was a prostitute, another brother she describes as "a rebel", and a mother who had a child by a lover.

Has it affected the youngster at all?

"The child is totally normal, perfectly well behaved and disciplined," according to her agent Friendly.

In fact, Mandy says she hasn't even told her classmates she's an accomplished show person.

"Now I'm being treated like a real kid," she says. "And I don't really like causing fits about things."

The youngster admits she is opinionated, though, and she'll risk incurring a director's wrath by 'causing a fit'.

"I don't talk back to them, but I talk back to them in a different way," she says.

"Like this one director, he had me doing this particular movement and I just said, 'excuse me sir, but this move is not going to work for me or the play. May I change it?' The other actors in the play were dropping skits and everything . . . I mean you weren't supposed to talk back to this director. But he realized I was right, and let me change it."

Mandy won't divulge her income from the plays and commercials, but according to her agent, she'll be quite capable of paying her way through college when she gets there.

And when Mandy says she just bought herself a piano, she's not referring to a miniature!



Nine-year-old Mississauga Mandy Morrison has been singing, dancing and acting since she was four years old. The grade five pupil at St. Catherine of Siena School was the youngest actress ever to portray Baby June in the stage play Gypsy.