

Rescue Dog to Play Toto in 'The Wiz' on Broadway

The Cairn Terrier was discovered on an Arkansas humane society website.

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A Cairn Terrier named Nigel has been plucked from obscurity to play Toto alongside singer Ashanti in Broadway's latest retelling of "The Wiz."

The 15-pound dog was found by famous Broadway animal trainer Bill Berloni on a website that lists dogs available for adoption from the Northeast Arkansas Humane Society in Jonesboro.

"Nigel's headshot called out to me," Berloni said in a statement. "After 30 years of rescuing dogs for Broadway shows, which began with Sandy [in the original production of 'Annie'], I know talent when I see it. After speaking to the shelter about his personality I knew he had star potential. I predict a great future for him. He is as smart as Sandy with the right amount of Bruiser [from 'Legally Blonde']."

Singer Ashanti, who plays Dorothy, had another pint-sized pup in mind for the part – her own.

"I had requested for my puppy to be Toto because I have a teacup Yorkie named Mimi," Ashanti joked to the Village Voice. "But it probably wouldn't be a good idea because she would be running around on stage and following me, not listening to anyone else. But I know she's going to be jealous – that I know!"