Kelsey Kovacevich: Majoring in performing arts

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KELSEY KOVACEVICH
MAJORING IN PERFORMING ARTS

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“I spend half my day playing pretend”

We've all probably thought the same thing upon hearing the words “theater major”. Images of extroverted, carefree students singing and dancing through life without any worries and or obligations other than memorizing a few lines and doing a little song and dance on stage pop into our heads and leave us feeling a little judgmental and maybe a bit jealous. However, the reality is far, far different for Kelsey Kovacevich, senior in acting and directing.

A typical schedule for a dreaded Monday in Kelsey’s world kicks off with a P90X workout in Pearson at 8:30 a.m. Never heard of P90X? Basically, take some ass-kicking, throw in some masochist flakes, and add a side of pure hardcore determination, and call it a work-out. This is followed by a theater class from 10 to 2. In this class, she reads way too many plays and other works written by various playwrights and directors to stay sane. She also learns how to act the good old fashioned way, through experience. In a room with black painted walls, complete with mirrors and stage lighting, Kelsey does what she loves.

“I spend half my day playing pretend,” she says.

Often times, she will then rehearse scenes with partners. Sounds like common sense, I know, but this can get more complicated than your average lab partner. Sometimes partners are short-term, but occasionally they develop into long-term relationships – and not always for the best. “It’s like having a sibling you don’t get along with as well, but at the end of the day you love them.”

After this, she attends rehearsals for Chekhov Short Stories from 3:30 to 5:30, before going to another rehearsal for Love’s Labor’s Lost from 7 until 11. Oftentimes she’s up until 1:30 in the morning. By the end of the semester, things really start to pile up, but Kelsey says she wouldn’t have it any other way. “I wouldn’t have made it through 4 years if it wasn’t fun, but it’s still intense.”

Kelsey has always had a love of theater, and she’s been pursuing it since the age of 14. She got heavily involved in school productions as well as community theater. She has been involved in approximately 50 productions throughout her short career.

It was during her sophomore year of high school, when she was just 16 years old, that she was presented with the opportunity to be a director when the one assigned left for seminary. The production was the locally-written musical, The 5 Ghosts of Ebenezer Scrooge. The cast consisted of members from 6 to 75 years old, and went so smoothly she still can’t explain it. “I don’t know what they were thinking to be honest,” she says. Whatever they were thinking, the production went off without a hitch. She says it was amazing, but definitely a learning experience.

She has since directed 2 small-scale shows at ISU. She says this year will be a new challenge because the M-Shop no longer allows shows, so the objective is to get a production mounted through ISU itself. One of the major roadblocks to getting any show off the ground is finding a venue, particularly because of cost concerns. Stephens Auditorium is a separate entity from Iowa State, and in order to use it, you have to rent it. If you think renting textbooks is going to keep you eating ramen for a month, consider how much a theater hall would set you back.

Currently, Kelsey is hard at work on Love’s Labor’s Lost, a Shakespeare play directed by Matt Foss. The play is scheduled to open in November, and Kelsey says the play is really accessible to modern audiences. Additionally, she is also working on Chekov Short Stories which is not a play, but a collection of short stories that are aimed at "creating a piece of theater based on short stories.” And for VEISHEA, ISU Theater is presenting the musical RENT.

Looking for a way to get involved? Kelsey says ISU theater is in full swing and looking for anyone who’d like to contribute. They are in need of 10-minute and one-act actors. Audition lists are posted on a bulletin board on the second floor in Pearson Hall, or online at the ISU Theater website. It only takes a short rehearsal to get your foot in the door. Not interested in acting, but want to be a part? They could definitely use a little TLC for set design and setup, which is primarily student-run.

Kelsey hopes that in the future she’ll be able to take her career to Chicago to become an artistic director. Artistic director is a fancy way of saying she’ll help select shows for a venue to host, direct some of those shows, and, most importantly, bring her own flair to the theater productions.

We here at Revival Magazine and everyone at ISU wish Kelsey all the luck in the world in achieving her dreams for her career.

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