



Press Release

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St. Cecilia student participates in theatre program at Brown

St. Cecilia Academy junior Taylor Ely was one of only 25 high school drama students selected nationwide to participate in the Brown University TheatreBridge Program.

TheatreBridge is a six week immersion in theatre studies for high school students, hoping to link the high school and college theatre experiences while encouraging a lifetime of creative expression. The program requires teacher recommendation. Taylor was drawn to the program because of the small number of students participating and because she wanted to do something she couldn't do anywhere else.

"I researched a lot of different programs and auditioned and was accepted to many, but I wanted to go to TheatreBridge. It was small and I knew it would benefit me the most because I would learn new techniques," says Taylor.

"Taylor has a lot of passion for acting. Her vibrant personality sparkles when she is on the stage," said SCA theatre director Cathie Correia Stamps. "She takes constructive criticism well in order to excel in her craft and I knew this opportunity would give her a chance to grow more."

Students in the program attended classes, workshops, and seminars six days a week for 13 hours a day. Taylor particularly enjoyed learning the Meisner technique, a series of exercises developed by Sanford Meisner that focuses on following impulses while acting.

"Instead of explicitly planning the mood of a particular scene, an actor lets herself respond to the situation or character, often leading to a much better representation of human interaction," Taylor explains.

The TheatreBridge faculty, not only from Brown but also from other colleges such as Boston University and Vassar College, represents an accomplished and dedicated group of instructors with excellence in their respective fields. Students are coached in their acting, directing and writing to create original performances.

Taylor reflects, "I learned how to better my acting from this program, but more importantly I gained role models and friends that will last a lifetime." She also learned

from the faculty outside of the classroom. “I spent a lot of time with them at dinner and on breaks. The most important thing they taught me was discipline,” said Taylor. One of her role models is a bit closer to home, “None of this would have been possible without the guidance and inspiration of Mrs. Stamps, who planted in me this passion for acting and performing.”

Taylor believes that what she learned at TheatreBridge can be applied to education in general: “Learning can be a choice inside and outside the classroom. You have to open yourself to learning and not look at school as a chore.”

Taylor hopes to become involved in community theater as well as participating in shows at SCA. The St. Cecilia Academy Players will be presenting *A Light on the Hill*, an original drama about the school’s 150 year history, written by theater director Cathie Correia Stamps on Nov. 12-14.

St. Cecilia Academy--Nashville’s oldest private high school founded in 1860 by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation—will celebrate its 150th anniversary throughout the 2010-2011 school year. The Academy has been named to the Top 50 best Catholic high schools in the U.S. list four times since 2004. Eighty-five percent of the 53 Class of 2010 members were offered college scholarships totaling \$5.5 million. That equals an average of over \$100,000 in offered college scholarships per graduate.

Photograph cutline: SCA junior Taylor Ely performs during the school’s spring 2010 performance of *Snoopy! The Musical*.

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