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Junior High student stars in local production of "Alice in Wonderland"

Contributed by Erika Daggett
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One could say that when the acting bug bit Emily Kissela, a Sycamore Junior High School seventh grader, it left a lasting impression.

Appearing on stage since the age of seven, Kissela's first role was a part in a local production of "Alice in Wonderland". Now, at the age of 13, Kissela will revisit her roots, but this time, she will be the star.

On May 2-4, Kissela will star as Alice, the curious girl who falls down a rabbit hole, in Acting Up's performance of "Disney's Alice in Wonderland, Jr." Acting Up is a young performers community theatre group in Mason.

"I was so excited when I saw that Acting Up was doing 'Disney's Alice in Wonderland' because I was in 'Alice in Wonderland' when I was 7 years old. It was the first time I ever auditioned for a show, and the first time I was ever on stage, other than my family's living room," said Kissela. "From that point on I was hooked and have been doing theater ever since."

"I was beyond thrilled when I got the part of Alice!" she continued. "I remember how much I admired the person who played Alice when I was 7 and I couldn't believe that now it was my turn to be Alice! Little kids will be watching me and thinking they are seeing Alice. How cool is that!"

At first glance, Emily's resume resembles that of a well-seasoned actor, yet the life of her acting career spans a mere six years.

Aside from performing with Acting Up, where she also appeared in their 2007 production of "Once On This Island", Kissela has appeared in The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati's productions of "The Wizard of Oz", "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer", and "Seussical, Jr." She has also performed with Footlighters, Inc. in "Seussical, Jr." and with the East Side Players in "The Music Man" and "Oklahoma", among others.

In order to perform at her best, Kissela has dedicated much time to perfecting her craft, spending the past three summers participating in The Cincinnati Children's Theatre STAR summer acting camp, in addition to studying dance for six years, piano for six years and voice for three years.

And she has no plans to slow down.

"Recently, I have broken out of my shell a bit doing local Idol competitions, and singing rock songs with Innocent Commotion, a seventh-grade band at Sycamore," she said. "I have also been invited to sing country at a couple of church festivals this summer with a local band called The Big Juicy Ham. It is kind of fun performing songs that my friends listen to on their Ipods."

With such focus and determination toward the stage, one might think Kissela's talents lie in performing arts only. Yet, Kissela is the exception to the rule, earning the Presidential Physical Fitness Award, being named to the Academic Honor Roll, and being a member of the tennis team. Yet, her true love remains the theatre.



Sycamore Junior High School student Emily Kissela will star as Alice in a local production of "Disney's Alice in Wonderland, Jr."

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“I just love the stage!” she explained. “Singing and acting are my passion. The larger the audience, the more excited I am, whether I am on stage with a group or by myself. I really don't get nervous. I just love to make the audience have a good time.”

To see Kissela in her latest performance, the public is invited to Acting Up's “Disney's Alice in Wonderland Jr.,” the first weekend in May. Show times are Friday (May 2) at 7 p.m., Saturday (May 3) at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Sunday (May 4) at 2 p.m. All performances will be at the Mason High School Theater, 6100 Mason Montgomery Road. Tickets are \$10 each and are available online at www.ActingUp.com or at the box office one hour before show time. For more information call 513-588-0988.

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