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Holland Resident Performed at World Premier of 'Goddess Wheel'

By JUNE PORTNOY

Holland resident, Elizabeth Miller, recently performed at the world premier of "Goddess Wheel," a new musical by "Hair," composer, Galt MacDermot, with lyrics written by playwright and lyricist, Matty Selman.

The premier was held this past April at Wagner College Theatre, one of the top 20 collegiate theater programs in the country.

"We were the first ones to put on a full-scale production of this show," says Elizabeth, a junior at Wagner College's Theater Program in Staten Island, New York.

"Goddess Wheel" is the musical adaptation of the play, "Lysistrata," by Aristophanes. It tells the story of the Peloponnesian War between Sparta and Athens. The women, fed up with the war, decide to withhold sex from their husbands until the men sign a peace treaty bringing the war to an end.

Elizabeth, who played Myrrhina, a supporting lead role, says, "Up until 'Goddess Wheel,' I had always performed in shows I had seen before, so I could model my roles based on existing characters. However, during this show, I actually originated my character."

One of the challenges Elizabeth faced performing on a new show was adapting to constant changes since this musical was truly "a work in progress." She adds, "The lyrics, script and lines were changed on a regular basis, but this helped me with my mental flexibility as an actress."

Galt came to Wagner during a few rehearsals and for the show's opening night.

"It was a huge honor to perform in a musical composed by Galt," says Elizabeth. "We were all a little star struck to meet him."

Although Elizabeth anticipates that there will be many modifications made to "Goddess Wheel, her hope is that this production will ultimately tour, but to date, nothing yet has been announced.

"Goddess Tour" was Elizabeth's third college performance.

Prior to attending Wagner College, Elizabeth performed in a variety of plays at Council Rock High School South in Holland and at the Downtown Performing Arts Center in Lambertville.

From elementary school through high school, she performed somewhere between 15 to 20 plays at the Bucks County Playhouse's children's theater and on its main stage.

She also performed at the Washing Crossing Open Air Theatre when it was still owned by the Bucks County Playhouse.

Elizabeth's acting career began when she was just eight and decided the night before her sister's audition at the Bucks County Playhouse that she too wanted to audition. She practiced singing two songs from the "Sound of Music," and as a result, landed a part as the smallest Siamese child in the "King and I."

She hasn't stopped performing since then.

Elizabeth returned to her hometown of Holland this summer. While here, she performed the role of Kate Monster in Avenue Q with the Once Upon a Time Players Theatre Company at the Washington Crossing Open Air Theatre in early June.

Her next performance with Wagner College's Theatre Program will take place around Thanksgiving when she'll play Ellie Woods in "Legally Blond."

Elizabeth is majoring in theater and speech at Wagner College with a concentration in performance.

After graduating, she's hoping to live in New York and audition as often as possible.

"Now that I have so much experience and have even originated a role, I feel more confident walking into auditions," says Elizabeth.

"My dream is to pursue a career in theater. I grew up enjoying theater, going to Broadway shows once a year with my family, and I love the idea of being a part of the theater experience that has been a part of my life since I was a child."