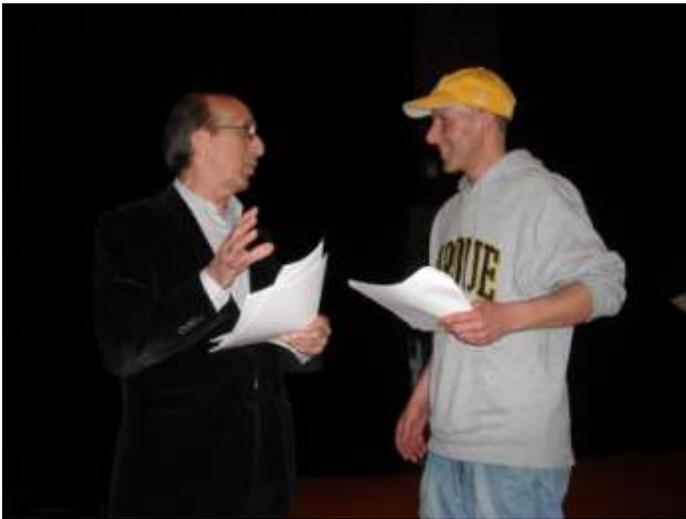


Posted May 2, 2013

Kevin Dreher: Engineering a Theater Career Winner of the 2012-2013 PCCC Theater Scholarship



(left) Kevin Dreher rehearses a scene with Professor R.G. Rader, coordinator of the PCCC Theater program and director of plays.

“We can talk to Professor Rader and have a friendly relationship outside of class, but in class, he’s the director and it’s all business,” said Kevin.

Kevin Dreher will take the stage Friday night, acting the part of a piano moving company employee, in “Talking to Each Other,” the newest offering of the PCCC Theater Program’s Frontstage Series.

Yet, the Paterson resident and winner of the 2012-2013 PCCC Theater Scholarship has a personal story that can rival any onstage drama.

A graduate of Roselle Park High School, Kevin previously attended New Jersey Institute of Technology where he was pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering. At NJIT, he was president of the National Honor Society and a fraternity brother. He was also working at Lucent Technologies, assembling mainframes for cell phones.

In 2009, with 100 credits into his junior year, Kevin suffered devastating injuries when he was hit by a car. “I had a collapsed lung, broken bones in my neck and leg, and was badly hurt,” he said.

He moved back home with his parents to recover and could not return to school for two years.

“While I was home, I really fell behind in my studies,” said Kevin. In 2011, he was well enough to resume his studies, and decided to enter Passaic County Community College.

Then another accident occurred, but this was a happy one. On his way to the gym one day, Kevin noticed a rehearsal in progress in the theater across the hall. “I’m a movie buff and took an interest,” he explained.



Kevin (far left) works on a scene with other cast members of Talking to Each Other, an original short play by Professor R.G. Rader to be presented May 3 in the PCCC Theater

Then another accident occurred, but this was a happy one. On his way to the gym one day, Kevin noticed a rehearsal in progress in the theater across the hall. "I'm a movie buff and took an interest," he explained. After attending a couple of performances at PCCC, Kevin decided to take some theater courses. That decision re-directed his life. He became a theater major.

"I like acting and scenery and costumes, and everything that goes into creating a play," said Kevin. "After I tried a few classes, I could see myself in that environment."

Kevin acknowledged the career change was surprising. "It's a 180" he said. Yet in many ways, his approach to both engineering and theater seem connected. Though he likes acting, Kevin envisions himself in a backstage role, engineering some of the off-stage activities that go into a production.

Kevin attends PCCC part-time while working several jobs as a waiter. He maintains a 3.8 GPA and was nominated for the prestigious award of Who's Who in American Junior Colleges for academic excellence.

He is also very grateful for the theater scholarship which is awarded annually to a deserving student who is majoring in theater. "I was surprised by it," he said. "It's been very helpful, and I used it toward tuition."

At a recent rehearsal, Kevin showed the results of his training, when he jumped in and filled the role of a student actor who was absent. "I really like the chemistry of working with others and improvising."

Kevin plans to continue his education, possibly at Kean University, and eventually earn a post-graduate degree in theater, but for now the aspiring stage manager is taking his cues from what he calls, "the great theater program at PCCC."

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