

Meet Tom Morris

Trip to New York sparked an interest in theater

TimesReporter.com staff writer

Posted Jun 30, 2011 @ 04:13 PM

NEW PHILADELPHIA — **Name?** Tom Morris.

Hometown and current residence? Dover for both. I also have lived in Philadelphia, Pa., and Cleveland for extended periods of time.

Occupation? Language Arts teacher and drama director at Dover High.

What led to your interest in theater? When I was about 10, my two aunts took me to New York City and we saw Sandy Duncan in “Peter Pan.” I was mesmerized!

Do you remember your first stage appearance? My freshman year in high school, I was cast as Dr. Einstein in “Arsenic and Old Lace.” I’ve also played the part of Mortimer, and directed this show at Dover High this past fall.

What was behind your decision to direct “High School Musical” at **Little Theatre of Tuscarawas County**? With two sons aged 9 and 6, “High School Musical” has been very prevalent in our household. It has a great message of acceptance and being yourself, and is appropriate for all audiences.

Were you a fan of the movies? Being a literature teacher, I liked the parallels of the plot to “Romeo & Juliet.” The movies also have great characters and catchy songs.

Was casting the show difficult? I was really pleased that over 60 people auditioned and all of the Tuscarawas County high schools were represented. With this much interest in the show, it was difficult to cast; however, I think that I ended up with a very strong group of actors and singers.

Did you try to cast “types,” such as Zac Efron, etc? I tried to keep the movie characters in mind, but it was more important to me that my cast was believable and worked as an ensemble.

Do you have a favorite show(s)? This is a really difficult question as I find something that I like in all of the shows I see. The shows that really stand out for me are when I saw “Les Miserables” when it opened in London, Sutton Foster in “Thoroughly Modern Millie,” “The Foreigner” my sophomore year at Kenyon College and “Jersey Boys.”

What is the favorite role you’ve played? Every role has been fun and challenging. The few that stand out are Will Parker in “Oklahoma!,” Hysterium in “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum,” Charlie in “Flowers for Algernon,” Gary in “Noises Off!” and, most recently, Tinman in “The Wizard of Oz.”

Is there a role you’d secretly like to play someday? I would love to have a shot at Macbeth or Iago in “Othello.”

Can you tell us your most embarrassing moment, on stage? Fortunately, nothing really comes to mind. It was a little embarrassing when I played Cogsworth in “Beauty and the Beast” that my costume was so hot that the plastic clock face on the front of it kept steaming up.

Family? My wife, Allison, and I celebrated our 10th anniversary in June. She has been incredibly supportive of my endeavors in the theater, and she is my in-house choreographer! We have two wonderful sons, Noah, who is nine, and Luke, six.

Copyright 2011 The Times-Reporter. Some rights reserved