

Catch This! McLean High School's 'Catch Me If You Can' Interviews-Part 1: Director Amy Poe

Joel Markowitz

In Part 1 of 'Catch This! McLean High School's' *Catch Me If You Can Interviews* , meet Director Amy Poe.

Joel: Why did you decide to bring *Catch Me If You Can* to the McLean Theatre stage?

Amy: I love the Spielberg film, *Catch Me If You Can*, and I love the story of Frank Abignale Jr. After the rights for the musical were made available for regional theatres, I knew that it would be a great show to bring to our stage. Because Frank Jr. is a teenage conman, our high school students are really fascinated by his story and the genius crimes he commits at such a young age. I'm so happy to be able to bring the regional premiere of this musical to the McLean stage!

What is your vision for this production?

At the heart of my vision, I want the audience to feel charmed by Frank Jr.'s spellbinding and charismatic personality so that they can fully understand how a 17 year-old was able to con the world with his schemes. Visually, the show will look and feel like a combination of 1960's variety show (as dictated by the script) and a classic smoke and mirrors magic show. There will be a lot of surprises, intrigue, and excitement as the audience gets a front row view of nuances behind Frank Jr.'s genius plots. In this show you can expect to see classic Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman style musical theatre complete with big band standards, high-energy choreography and innovative special effects.



Director Amy Poe.

How many students auditioned, and how long are you rehearsing and fine-tuning the show?

Over 75 students auditioned for the opportunity to be in our production. We will be running rehearsals until we open the show on April 24th. We always continue to fine tune and make improvements after each performance.

How has working with the cast and designers aided you and the other directors in executing your vision?

It is always inspiring to work with a variety of cast members and designers on all the projects I direct. Getting multiple sources of input will spur ideas and always encourages creativity. I gather information from many resources and experts and then use that information to springboard into a completely new idea and vision, always trying to reinvent each production I produce.

Which scenes were the most challenging for you to direct?

The play has a built-in structure of a 1960's variety show, and that presents its own challenges because most audiences today are not familiar with the typical 1960's variety show. The challenge has been to translate the script-dictated variety show to a modern framework that the audience can recognize and connect to in the present day. As a result, the hardest scenes to direct are the numbers where Frank is part of the television show because I don't want to lose the nostalgia of the 1960s glitz and glam of a classic 'Dean Martin-style' show, but I also don't want to confuse

the audience or detract from the absorbing story at hand.

Introduce us to the leads and what do you admire most about their performances?

Alex Stone plays Frank Jr. with his co-stars Jack Posey, as his counterpart Detective Carl Hannratty, and his love interest Lily Lord as Brenda Strong. They are all incredibly strong performers with great chemistry. Alex is able to capture the charisma of Frank Jr. captivating the audience with his remarkable stage presence and astounding voice. Jack Posey is able to convey the persistence and yet humor of real-life detective Carl Hannratty with his stylized and thoroughly convincing vocal and dance numbers. Lily Lord also amazes with her delicate charm and yet soaring, clear notes that resonate with audiences well after each performance.

How would you describe the score and what songs/ are your favorites? This is a tough question. Its hard not to say "Fly, Fly Away," which is the classic "11 O'Clock Number" that will move audiences late in the second act. But in my personal opinion, I would have to say "Live in Living Color" because it starts the show with such a bang. It is hard not to be excited about the show to come after that energetic showstopper.

How has Bobby McCoy, your Musical Director, supported your vision for the production with his work?

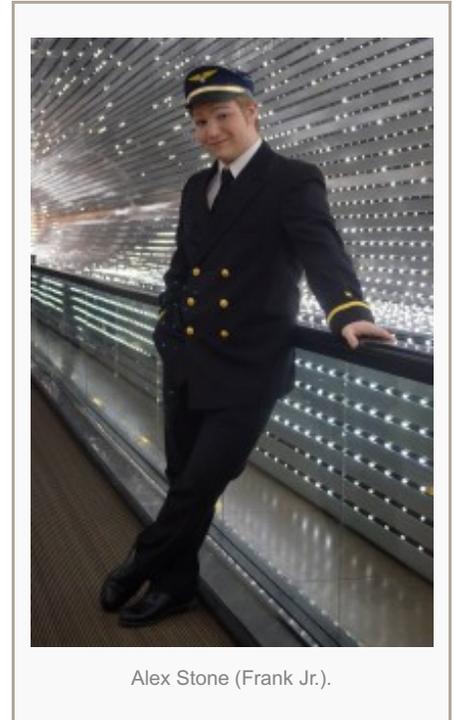
Bobby is a fantastic Music Director and we always have a great time working together. We work well together because we have high standards and push all of the cast members to do their best. We also both have inherent love for the music from *Catch Me If You Can*, and Bobby understands how big band music works. He grasps the full sound I am looking for and the classic tone that this show needs. If Bobby is music directing, I always know that he will produce the best music and vocals possible, and that's why I love working with him!

What are some of the challenges and positives of directing and performing in the MTC space?

The biggest challenge we face in our auditorium is space. With such a big show, we have to have space for a full orchestra, a large set, and full-cast dance numbers. As a result, we have built a thrust that has added about 320 square feet of space to our stage specifically for this show. We also, like all theatres, face the challenges of funding and outdated equipment. We are utilizing many avenues of fundraising in order to fund the technical spectacle that this musical craves.

Why should audiences come see MTC's *Catch Me If You Can*?

There are so many fantastic elements to this show from the orchestra, the singers, the choreography, the 1960 period costumes, the sleek and mod set, all which are the perfect vehicle for this enduring and exciting story. The magic of the big screen transfers to the stage in a way that live performance can only capture. This real-life story combined with the classic musical style makes for a spectacular throw back, glamorous evening at the theatre.



Alex Stone (Frank Jr.).

**McLean High School
Theatre Company
Presents...**

**catch me
if you can
the musical**



**April 24-26 at 7pm
26-27 at 2pm
McLeanDrama.com**

Catch Me If You Can plays on April 24-27, 2013 at McLean High School -1633 Davidson Road, in McLean, VA. For tickets, purchase them [online](#), or at the door.

© 2015 DCMetroTheaterArts. All Rights Reserved.