

Caledon's Jayde Lavoie ? staying outside the ?box? in theatre

By Constance Scrafield

The mid-teen years can be a most formative time of our lives.

It certainly seems that this is so for 16-year-old Jayde Lavoie, who plays the part of Susan in Theatre Orangeville's Everything I love about Christmas show.

?The vice-principal at my school (Mayfield Secondary) at first said ?no' to me taking off virtually two months of school this year,? she told us.

However, she, her teachers and her parents ?worked hard? to bring enough evidence of her ability to cope with the long time off for the show and still deal with the burden of Grade 11.

?Of course,? she admitted, ?he might have thought it wouldn't work since I am off the next whole semester to go to Europe for three months.?

This was, indeed, startling news and very exciting. Along with other students from other countries and their supervisors, Lavoie will travel to France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Greece.

Asked about the trip, she said, ?We follow a daily structure. Workout in the mornings; then, according to where we are, there are places to see and activities organized.?

?It will be perfect for me,? she said. ?We're going to so many places ? everything there has been there for thousands of years. So, we'll be walking cities or climbing a mountain. So much stimulation all the time.?

She won a partial scholarship for the adventure by writing an essay on how it would benefit her, accompanied by her marks and volunteer record. She is clearly thrilled about the prospect of this trip ? and, who would not be?

Back to the show and her life to date as an actress. ?Last time I worked with pros, I was 13,? she commented. ?This time, I'm treated like an adult ? everyone listens to each other ? there's never a dull moment. ? She added with affection, ?Everyone's quirky in their own way.?

About theatre as a career, something to which she has always laid claim, Lavoie now remarked, ?I'm just a sponge for information. Theatre is what I'm good at, but I'm quite in the dark about what I'll do.?

She has fallen in love with the subject of anthropology and who knows what else will come?

We pressed on, however, to ask her what she likes about acting.

?I have always lived on the outskirts in the groups I've known,? she replied. ?It (the theatre) is a welcoming and fully accepting place. Being in the theatre, I feel that it is all right for me to be myself.?

She went on to reflect, ?The weird feeling inside that I get on stage ? it's outside the box every time ? it's very exciting and I cling on to that. It's never a dull moment.?

Having said that, hockey, not theatre, was her first love.

She relayed the story of the change in her life: ?I got attacked by a dog while playing rep hockey. Then, I saw an audition call for Peter Pan and when I got the part, it became a choice between theatre or hockey. Then I got a part in the Christmas show and theatre took over from hockey.?

She went on to explain a little of the history before that final decision. ?The year before, our team got a new coach and he put me out over his daughter. I lost standing and saw the competition. I realized they were all very serious over children playing with sticks and hockey pucks.?

Now, she is very involved with art. ?I paint,? she said, ?and am self-taught to play the guitar. My dad gave me a guitar and I am singing with it ? I didn't like singing.?

There is not much about the theatre in her background. Stretching the point, she noted, ?My dad played the Lion in the Wizard of Oz in Grade 7...?

What about this show, we asked, Everything I love about Christmas?

?This shows appeals to absolutely everyone,? she declared. ?As David (Nairn) tells the audience, it is the perfect opportunity to just go ?ahhhh.' Despite all my life in drama, to make people laugh for two hours is really cool.?

The audience joins in to sing the carols with the cast.

?The audience is almost another character,? she remarked.

Everything I love about Christmas runs until Dec. 21 ? a huge treat for the whole family, with a pal or on your own; get tickets and information from the theatre box office, by telephone at 519-942-3423 or online www.theatreorangeville.ca