

Tommy Pegan's Journey Behind the Scenes

Take a behind the scenes look at Tommy's life of musical theater, and big dreams coming to reality.

By Madelyn Beck



Image taken by Katherine Kenwell Cich

Thomas Pegan, formerly known as the self proclaimed stage name “Tomme” for dramatic effect, and now better known as Tommy, is a recent Elon University graduate who has had big dreams of working in the fine arts for his entire life. As a child, Tommy was amazed by how moving and inspiring the arts could really be.

Tommy was born in Buffalo, NY into his family as a twin, but “[they] could not be more different,” said Pegan. “My brother was really into sports when we were kids, and I could not have been less interested. I used to speak for my brother to the point where he was mute for a while, so my mom figured I needed somewhere to put my energy and enrolled me in dance and theater classes instead.”

At a very young age, Tommy had a childhood dream of directing his own theatrical production on his back porch. He wanted full creative freedom and control over a show, which is where his aspirations to become a musical director stemmed from.

“When I was little I used to religiously go to Sesame Street Live every single year, and I was always really enamored by it because I didn’t view them as the characters from Sesame Street. I was very aware that it was a production, and that was everything to me,” said Tommy. “And on

top of that I remember an episode of Blue's Clues, where Blue was putting on a talent show in her backyard, so I asked my mom if I could do Sesame Street Live in the same type of setting as Blue's talent show."

After years of planning different productions from the age of eight, all the way through high school, participating in community theater, and teaching youth acting classes along the way, Tommy felt a calling to study arts administration, with a concentration in the performing arts in college.

"When covid hit and we were all sent home in the middle of my sophomore year of college, I needed something to keep me from going crazy," said Tommy. "I was feeling a burst of inspiration and determination to make my childhood passion project a reality so I started tirelessly working on the plans to direct a production of *Ruthless!* the musical, on my back porch."

What started as a dream that seemed like it would never leave the page, was really starting to come to reality. Tommy began searching for scripts and rehearsal tracks to teach the vocals. Read throughs of the script, and cast meetings were taking place on zoom as lockdowns were in full effect at the time. But, regardless of all the obstacles, this was really something Tommy felt his passion for again.

After months of online, and eventually in person rehearsals in his backyard, *Ruthless!* was ready to perform with a six person cast, a DIY lighting and sound set up, and a packed audience surrounding his back porch. It was that day that PorchMusical was born.

Since *Ruthless!*, Tommy produced two other full length musicals on his porch, *Addams Family* and *The Prom*, each one getting bigger and more extravagant and the one before. Show quality and audience attendance only increased as more and more people became interested in what PorchMusical was.

"I really took on every role of the production team of a musical. I learned how to curate a rehearsal schedule, teach vocals to the cast, costume everyone, design the set, direct the show of all things, but it was all worth it to see the final project pulled together," said Tommy.

Tommy took classes and performed in musicals at many community theaters around him, but he really stuck at The Academy of Theater Arts. Not only did he perform, but here he also worked as a part of the staff, sharing his love for theater with the youth.

The summer of 2022 he was offered the opportunity to direct his own production of a show of his choosing in a more formal setting than his porch. He worked with owner of the theater, Dina Slawson, to figure out a schedule for when he would be able to hold rehearsals, and a budget he would be given for costumes, set pieces, and props, but from there he was given full creative control in an actual theater.

Auditions for the musical *Company* took place in June, and rehearsals ran through August.



Image taken by Katherine Kenwell Cich

“My five-year-old self sitting in the audience of Sesame Street Live would be shitting his pants if he could have seen how far we have come since then,” said Tommy.

Post college Tommy has new life goals of working on Broadway as the part of a production team.

Source list:

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