

HER VOICE CARRIES

nicole
C R I L L Y

BALANCING SCHOOL, PERFORMING AND
SCHUBERT SINCE THE 6TH GRADE.

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ACCORDING TO THE

dictionary, being passionate about something means having "a strong or extravagant fondness, enthusiasm, or desire for anything." For Nicole Crilly of Hawthorne, her

passion for the performing arts earned her the opportunity to attend the Manhattan School of Music while still in high school. Now an arts and entertainment management major at Rider University, Nicole opened up to us about just how deeply rooted her passion for acting and singing really is—and how she won't be stopping any time soon!

DOWNTOWN: WHEN DID YOU REALIZE YOUR LOVE FOR PERFORMING WAS SO STRONG?

NICOLE: I've loved to sing for as long as I can remember, but I suppose I first discovered my passion for performing in 6th grade when I was in an opera. I even had an aria written specifically for me! It was an amazing experience. I first realized my inclination towards acting during my freshman year at Hawthorne High School when I was Veruca Salt in *Willy Wonka*.

WHICH DO YOU PREFER—ACTING OR SINGING?

I would say singing, because it's the kind of thing that you can do almost anywhere at almost any time for fun. You can sing with your friends, or at parties to entertain people when they ask.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ACTUALLY PERFORM?

I do approximately two or three musicals, one play, and several concerts a year.

DO YOU EVER GET NERVOUS BEFORE PERFORMING?

Sometimes I do. But nervous energy is actually a good thing because it helps you to perform better. I've especially found this to

be true with musical theatre. To get in the zone, I imagine where my character is physically coming from before she enters a scene. It helps me to relax a little, but it also makes the character seem more realistic to me.

WHEN IT COMES TO AN AUDIENCE, IS BIGGER BETTER?

Believe it or not, I get more nervous with a smaller audience! I found the performances at Manhattan School of Music to be much more intimidating because the audiences were smaller.

WHOSE PERFORMANCE DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST?

As far as professionals go, there are many that I love! My favorite musical theatre actors include Bernadette Peters, Zachary Levi and Hugh Jackman. In TV and film, I love to watch Robert Downey Jr., Benedict Cumberbatch, Martin Freeman, Idris Elba, Tom Hiddleston, Jennifer Lawrence and Emma Stone. My favorite singers to hear live are Ed Sheeran and Bruno Mars.

HOW AWESOME WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC?

My time there was incredibly rewarding! I learned so much,

not only about singing and music theory, but also about technique and interpretation of lyrics. I learned all about different composers; [Franz] Schubert is my favorite. I also learned how to balance schoolwork and performing since I was there every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. That skill has proven invaluable to me. I also learned a little Italian and German!

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HAVE IN STORE FOR NICOLE CRILLY?

While my passions are singing and acting, I plan on getting involved in the business side of theatre after graduating from college. I'll either work at an acting agency or at a theatre company, depending on how things work out. Hopefully, I can make some connections that way, which will help me to go further in my performance career. I'll continue to take acting lessons and singing lessons too, and I'll audition for some independent films if I can. I plan on working my way up to bigger things, but I'll start small. And, if that doesn't work out, I'd be more than happy to stay involved with the business side of the entertainment industry. Of course, I'll continue to sing and act on the side. ☺

