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Students "break a leg" with CLIMB theatre auditions

Summary: Thanks to a recent invitation to the company by theatre faculty Siobhan Bremer, UMM students learned firsthand about the world of theatre and got an opportunity to audition for CLIMB theatre of St. Paul.

(December 3, 2007)-Siobhan Bremer, now an assistant professor of theatre at the University of Minnesota, Morris, traveled with CLIMB Theatre, a St. Paul educational touring company, while doing her graduate studies in St. Paul.

"It was a great way to get out into the 'real' theatre world and make contacts in the Twin Cities theatre community," said Bremer.

Due to Bremer's continued association with CLIMB, she asked them to visit UMM recently to discuss the company and hold auditions for interested students.

"Students learn about theatre, auditions and the real world of theatre in UMM theatre classes but rarely have the chance to actually audition until after graduation," she added. "Companies come [to campus] and hold workshops for our students, but I believe this is a first."

A notice was put on the campus' theatre callboard informing students of the opportunity, and, in order to audition, students were asked to bring an updated resume as well as a picture of themselves. Eleven students signed up to audition.

Two members of CLIMB visited UMM to facilitate dramatic activities and hold a mock session to demonstrate what CLIMB does when during visits to elementary and secondary schools. UMM students were able to ask questions about what CLIMB does and the opportunities that might be available to them.

During the audition the CLIMB staff set up a problematic situation for which students are asked to improvise a solution. CLIMB also incorporated some exercise theories that helped them understand the process of this type of educational theatre. The audition was a group audition so CLIMB could see the talent, physical ability, energy and process of the students.

Following the audition, CLIMB contacts the student(s) and sets up an interview and a second one-on-one audition. If the student is interested, they are encouraged to make arrangements for another audition.

UMM junior Hayley Saccoman said, "This was my first audition with a professional company. I was nervous but this was a very relaxed and fun experience. So great!"

Students now have one 'real world' audition under their belts and have the opportunity to keep in touch with CLIMB for future opportunities. They were informed about the availability of theatre jobs in the area, which can help them make contacts when they graduate.

"I was proud of how the students handled themselves and feel good that I was able to provide our students with a professional audition experience," said Bremer.

CLIMB is located in St. Paul and is comprised of two companies. One company performs regular shows and the other is a teaching company that visits schools in order to create plays that are geared to each particular audience.

Photo by Melissa Weber: CLIMB staff (back row, black jackets with white stripe) flank UMM theatre faculty Siobhan Bremer (back, second from left) with UMM students who auditioned.

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