

FEATURED ARTIST:

Annalise Klenow

REACHING THE AUDIENCE FROM THE STAGE



Following hours upon hours of rehearsal, Paly junior Annalise Klenow is prepared for the big show “Radium Girls,” in which she plays Mrs. Alma MacNeil, the no-nonsense supervisor of the dial painters.

Radium Girls is a “straight play,” meaning that it is a play without music. Klenow has significantly less experience performing in straight plays, providing her with a challenge for this specific role.

“I usually feel more comfortable when I can sing and express myself through music,” Klenow said. “So I think it’s fun that I’m doing something out of my comfort zone.”

Though it was out of her comfort zone, Klenow gave an outstanding performance and learned a lot through challenging herself. Klenow has enjoyed the performing arts, including theater, dancing and singing, since she was a child.

“When I was little I would always sing around the house,” Klenow said. “A lot of it was Disney music or from ‘The Sound of Music’ because Julie Andrews was one of my idols.”

Once she discovered her passion, Klenow needed fuel to keep it a flame, and her family has done a lot to provide that support.

“My mom put me in voice lessons because she saw it was something that I really enjoyed,” Klenow said.

Performing for an audience is a skill that takes a lot of courage, and Klenow credits her first director for helping her break out of her shell and spark her love for performing.

“She [my director] took my hand during the performance and let me just kind of sit on the edge of the stage and sing, and I felt really safe at that moment,” Klenow said. “I think it was pretty meaningful to have that experience at such a young age.”

Klenow has continued her artistic endeavors over the years, culminating in her participation in the performing arts at Paly. Paly has provided excellent resources for Klenow to perform, such as her theater one and two classes.

“They’ve introduced me to a lot of new materials and taught me a lot about the history of theater, which I think is important because you can be very talented, but you should also know the background and roots of theater,” she said.

Klenow sees acting in theater as a worthwhile experience that anyone can benefit from.

“To imagine how a character that’s not you sees the world, can help you become more empathetic and help you understand emotions better,” Klenow said. “What I love about [theater] is the

feeling that you’re giving the audience something.”

Some of Klenow’s more unique roles have included playing Grandpa Joe from “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” a fairy godmother from Cinderella and the beast from “The Beauty and the Beast,” which provided challenges of its own.

“Since that is typically a male part with male vocals, it was definitely challenging for me not only on my voice, but acting as well,” Klenow said.

Klenow believes more actors should consider moving out of their comfort zones.

“I think an actor should play a role of the gender they don’t identify as at least once,” she said. “It’s a fun experience.”

Klenow’s involvement in the arts extends past her interest in musical theater. Her participation in the spectrum choir at Paly has helped her improve her technical singing skills.

“When you sing in a choir, it’s a lot more about listening,” Klenow said. “You might be more focused on dynamics and all the technical things than when you’re just by yourself kind of belting it out.”

Looking for other mediums to express herself in, Klenow also dances. She especially enjoys ballet, which she does as a hobby.

“I do it for the exercise and the expression,” Klenow said. “I think it’s been a really good thing to have because it has given me a lot of confidence.”

“What I love about [theater] is the feeling that you’re giving the audience something.”

Klenow does ballet at DanceVisions in Palo Alto, where she assists in teaching younger kids the art.

“[Teaching the] younger girls makes me so happy that I can give them the love for art that I have,” Klenow said.

However, it’s not all sunshine and roses for someone in the performing arts. Auditioning involves putting oneself out there to create something for others which can be a daunting task.

“It’s a vulnerable moment,” Klenow said. “[Auditioning] is a stressful process because you’re being judged.”

Despite the challenges, the arts are an essential part of Klenow’s life that have allowed her to establish meaningful connections with others.

“I love [performing arts] because it’s given me a really good community of friends,” Klenow said.

Moving forward, Klenow hopes to continue in the arts in addition to whatever other activities decides to pursue.

“Senior year and onward I will definitely continue to do theater,” Klenow said.

Whether she’s playing the strict Mrs. MacNeil, the lonely Beast or the elderly Grandpa Joe, Klenow loves the performing arts because of its ability to affect the audience through storytelling.

“You have a lot of power there and I love being able to make people feel things,” Klenow said. “I think that’s a great thing to do.”

CAST

(in order of appearance)

- Mrs. Alma MacNeil.....Annalise Klenow
- Grandpa Joe.....Annalise Klenow
- The Beast.....Annalise Klenow
- Fairy Godmother.....Annalise Klenow
- Cosette.....Annalise Klenow
- Farrah the Faerie.....Annalise Klenow
- Mira.....Annalise Klenow
- Mermaid.....Annalise Klenow