



Recent Cast Members of “Jersey Boys” Meet with Saint Viator Students

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At the end of the Q & A session, the stars of *Under the Streetlamp* performed, “I Wonder Why,” before the students went back to class. (Photo by Saint Viator senior Chris Santucci)

Persistence, and just plain showing up. That was the advice from recent cast members of “Jersey Boys” to Saint Viator fine arts students who met with them before their *Under the Streetlamp* show on Friday at the Arlington Heights school.

Michael Cunio, Michael Ingersoll, Christopher Kale Jones and Shonn Wiley all cited some fine arts training in high school and college, but said it was their passion for live theater that drove them.

“Follow your heart and listen to your gut,” said Cunio, who played the role of Tommy DeVito in the Chicago’s Bank of America Theatre’s run of “Jersey Boys.”

Likewise, Ingersoll, who played the role of Nick Massi in Chicago’s three-year run, said performing as much as possible helps, from high

school and college productions, to community theater and other venues.

“It really comes down to how you invest yourself --- and put in the work,” said Ingersoll, who helped develop the *Under the Streetlamp* concept while performing in his one-man show at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre in Arlington Heights.

Students like junior Regina Aiuppa of Itasca and senior Stephanie Trovato of Bensenville went on to ask the singers when they knew they wanted to make it their life’s work, while junior Ryan Sevilla of Mount Prospect asked them how they started to market themselves as actors.

The cast members urged students to act on their energies, to create their own YouTube videos of their performances, and to include music clips and videos on their personal Web sites.

“You never know who’s going to see it, and when they’ll remember it,” added Cunio, who told them about landing his “Jersey Boys” role as a result of an audition for a different show that one of the producers had seen and remembered.

Junior Maddy Kelly of Arlington Heights asked for their tips in preparing for an audition, while junior David Vitale of Elk Grove Village asked how they dealt with rejection.

“You don’t learn from getting a part,” Cunio said. “Every time I’ve gotten better at something, I’ve failed at first.”

Following their 45-minute Q&A, students urged their hosts to give a sneak preview of their evening performance. The former “Jersey Boys” delivered, with just the right amount of doo-wop and harmony, singing the 1958 classic, “I Wonder Why.”

Proceeds from their sold-out show on Friday were earmarked for the school’s tuition assistance program and its fine arts programs. Members of the Saint Viator Parents’ Club and Patrons of the Arts co-hosted the evening.