

# STAGE MIGHT

Sophomore Moya Goodiel shines in AHS theater productions

by Anna Olson

From playing Gretel in "Hansel and Gretel" in the first grade to starring as Ariel in the AHS spring musical, "The Little Mermaid," Moya Goodiel is no stranger to the spotlight.

The sophomore, a self-proclaimed "choir kid," also has serious acting chops, earning her the lead in the production, set to take place March 16-18 in the Arapahoe Theater.

Acting, says Goodiel, a member of Chorale, allows her an escape from reality.

"It's really easy to get caught up in yourself, but when you're acting, you're like, 'No, I am a different person – I am this specific character,'" she says. "It's kind of nice to have a break from thinking about other things."

Goodiel says that before she got to high school, she never really felt accomplished or proud of the work she did on stage. However, that quickly changed when she came to Arapahoe, where she has had roles in "Footloose" and "The Laramie Project."

"Here, we have so many talented people," she says. "'Footloose' last year was so much fun to be in—not only the process of it, but just hanging out with these incredibly talented people together is what I really like."

Goodiel says that when she was cast as Ariel, she was surprised.

"When I looked at the company list for 'The Little Mermaid,' I thought the page loaded wrong," she says. "I was definitely shocked."

But drama teacher and musical director Will Brooks says, with 50-55 students auditioning, that Goodiel stood out to those doing the casting.

"We work as a team to figure out the company and the complicated puzzle of how each individual fits within the story," he says. "... And so the things that the story needed to do, she was expressing the way the story needed it."

The youngest of four siblings, Goodiel says most of her family loves to sing and have artistic abilities.

Her mother, Debbie Goodiel, says her daughter has thrived on stage since her first-grade performance as Gretel.

"I'll come home from work and I'll hear her practicing her songs," she says, noting the time commitment involved: rehearsals after school, on Saturday mornings, plus

"homework" nearly every night. "When there's something she's auditioning for, she'll put in the time to get to know the part and practice it so that she'll have a good audition."

Goodiel compares working on the play to participating in a sport.

"You have to practice outside of rehearsals," she says. "Theater is super fun, but learning dances while singing, that part sucks. Memorizing lines is a mental game. And it's also physically tiring because sometimes you're sitting there in rehearsal and you've had such a long day and you can't tune into what they're saying."

However, Debbie Goodiel adds, her attitude remains great, no matter the role she's cast in.

"She's so encouraging to other cast and crew members," her mom says. Still, stage fright can be an issue.

Goodiel says she often gets anxious before the curtain call.

"I both hype myself up and psych myself out," she says. "Before the show starts, opening night an hour before the show, or when it's call time when we get into the green room, then I definitely am like, 'Oh, my God, I'm gonna forget my lines.' But then when it's five minutes until the show, I'm backstage, the lights are off, Brooks is giving his speech, I'm like, 'OK, this is the thing we're focusing on.'"

As for post-high school, Goodiel says she would love to continue singing, perhaps not as a career, but possibly in a choir.

"I like music in general because it's pleasing to the ear and there's something about it that just clicks in my brain that makes me feel at peace," she says. "If I'm singing, I feel like I'm in a different world."

