

ARTS for Youth

SPOTLIGHT

Pearl Moore's love of conversation inspires her plays

Pearl Moore enjoys conversation and storytelling and that's what interests her about playwriting.

"I'm a beginner when it comes to playwriting, but I've always enjoyed dialogue whether it be in real life or in fiction. Talking. Chatting. Just being a storyteller. I think we forget that at times we all talk a lot, and I don't think people realize how just everyday communication influences people in significant ways.

"My mom influenced me a lot in my writing. She always told me that everyone has a story. Everyone. Even myself. We just have to be willing to listen to those stories. Other than my mom being a big part of my major influences my favorite playwright, Lee Blessing, is absolutely amazing. He wrote 'Eleemosynary' and 'Independence,' among other plays. He writes incredibly strong women in each of his plays and some times strong women

are hard to find in the theater world. Another big influence for me comedy wise would have to be Starkid. They tend to write and produce a new musical each year. They have a talent for coming up with the funniest dialogue and songs. They also give people the opportunity to watch their musicals for free on YouTube," she says.

Pearl used this love of dialogue in her play "Pretty," which was chosen for Barter Theatre's College Playwrights Festival. She worked on her play for nearly a year before she entered it and being chosen is important to her.

"It meant the world to me. What it meant to me is that it shows hard work really does pay off, and if you are passionate about your art then others will take notice as well," Pearl says.

"Pretty" springs from a low point in Pearl's life. In her play two sisters learn from a young age that their looks

mattered more to their mother than their actions. This shaped what they ate, wore and how potential suitors saw them. Their mother wants only what's best for them, but now that they are grown, she doesn't have as much control as she used to. Both sisters find that honesty may be the best policy – but at what cost?

"I had the idea come to me when I was feeling down about my weight. My Nanny Shirley used to always say that pretty is as pretty does. And that used to make me feel better because it's not about the outside but the inside. So, I started playing around with the concepts of beauty and why they are so important to our society," she says.

Pearl enjoys playwriting the most, but when she first started she wrote fanfiction. "Dorky, I know, but it brought me a love of writing and a bunch of cringe. Lately, I've been finding myself writing contemporary realism, because I feel I can connect more to the audience this way. I also try and write fantasy now and again, but I find myself dealing with too many rules and plot holes for that genre," she says.

She is involved in the theater life at Emory & Henry College, Emory, Virginia and is president of Alpha Psi Omega (a theater fraternity). Her major is acting and her minor is creative writing and she believes that is why she leans toward playwriting.

Pearl plans to go to graduate school for a MFA in playwriting. She dreams of becoming a television writer.

"My Nanny Shirley has always had an ear for music. She can make any piano talk. She always wanted me to be a singer but that is not the path for me. My brother and I both play instruments because our mama loved bluegrass music so much that she wanted her own kids to be able to play it too. So, it made sense that I would pick up the fiddle, and my brother would pick up the banjo," Pearl says.

She enjoys cosplaying, playing her fiddle, watching movies, crafting and writing fanfiction.

Pearl is the 22-year-old daughter of Ginger Star Thomas-Reed and Billy Franklin Moore Jr., and is a senior at Emory & Henry. *A!*



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