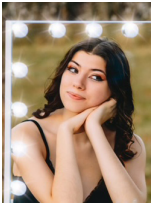


# A YEAR IN RETROSPECT 2022-2023

## END OF THE YEAR REFLECTIONS

This was a year of firsts for many singers. It was the first time Ian Olmos, Emily Scott and Vivian Speck participated in area Bill Riley Talent Shows. It was the first time Manuela Rodriguez participated in the Iowa High School Speech Association's District & State Individual Event Speech Contest. It was the first time Dari Cook and Ian Olmos participated in the Iowa District NATS Auditions. It was the first time Manuela Rodriguez participated in the Iowa High School Music Association's State Solo-Ensemble Contest. It was the first time Morgan Mayall, Ian Olmos or Manuela Rodriguez performed a high school musical theatre lead or supporting role. It takes so much courage to take a risk and do something for the first time, to allow yourself to be vulnerable, to step outside of your comfort zone so that you can grow as singers and performers. A special thank you to their parents for supporting these young performers and encouraging them to take that first step. Looking forward to supporting all singers wanting to take that first step. Only then will you grow.



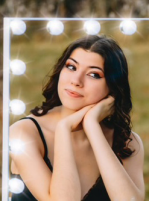
## FINE ARTS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Alyssa Speck auditioned and received a Fine Arts Scholarship from Drake University, Des Moines. Alyssa will be attending Drake University in the fall pursuing a degree in Musical Theatre and Theatre Education. She is a senior at Southeast Valley High School and the daughter of Pam Speck. Alyssa is a voice student of MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr. Congratulations, Alyssa!



## IOWA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ASSOCIATION'S STATE SOLO-ENSEMBLE CONTEST

Manuela Rodriguez, daughter of Pablo Rodriguez & Laura Miegge, and a freshman at St. Edmond High School participated in the 1A Iowa High School Music Association State Solo Ensemble Contest on Saturday, April 15 at Bishop Garrigan High School in Algona. She received a Division 1 rating on her vocal solo's and also received an "Outstanding Performance Award." Manuela will advance to perform at the Outstanding Performers Recital on Tuesday, May 16 at Iowa State University. Manuela sang "Se florindo e fedele", and "Nel cor piu non mi sento" both Italian art songs. Manuela is a voice student of MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr. Her high school vocal music instructor is Jacque Batz. Congratulations, Manuela!



### **IOWA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ASSOCIATION'S STATE SOLO-ENSEMBLE CONTEST**

Alyssa Speck, a senior at Southeast Valley High School and the daughter of Pam Speck participated in the 2A Iowa High School Music Association State Solo Ensemble Contest at Eagle Grove High School on Saturday, April 1. Alyssa sang "O del mio dolce ardor", an Italian art song and received a Division 2 rating. She is a senior at Southeast Valley High School. Alyssa is a voice student of MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr. Her high school vocal music instructor is Alan Beving. Congratulations, Alyssa!



### **IOWA DISTRICT NATS STUDENT AUDITIONS**

Area singers participating in the 2023 National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Iowa District Student Auditions held on March 24-25 at Central College in Pella, Iowa were Dari Cook and Ian Olmos. They auditioned in the high school women classical singing division. Dari is the daughter of David & Melissa Cook and a junior at Fort Dodge Senior High. She sang, "Se tu m'ami, se sospiri", "I Love All Graceful Things" and "El tra la la y el punteado". Ian is a freshman at Humboldt High School and the daughter of Jesus Olmos and Zugey Venegas. She sang, "Seben, crudele", "Think On Me" and "Early One Morning." Each student was required to perform three memorized art songs and received written critiques from a panel of judges based on their performance. All students represented McSweeney's School of the Performing Arts and were selected by private voice instructor MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr to participate.

152 high school, undergraduate and graduate school singers from college, university and private voice studios across Iowa participated in the two-day event. The event concluded with final auditions held on Saturday morning in Dowwstra Auditorium.

A special thank you to area pianist, Michelle Havlik-Jergens on providing piano accompaniments for this vocal competition and her support in traveling with us. Dari & Ian are voice students of MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr. Congratulations!

### **IOWA DISTRICT NATS STUDENT AUDITIONS**

Voice instructor, MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr judged the 2023 National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Iowa District Student Auditions held on March 24-25 at Central College in Pella, Iowa. She judged both classical singing and musical theatre categories. 152 high school, undergraduate and graduate school singers from college, university and private voice studios across Iowa participated in the two-day event. The event concluded with final auditions held on Saturday morning in Dowwstra Auditorium.

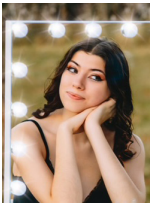
This was the first time since 2018 the Iowa District NATS Auditions were able to meet in person. The last two years, auditions were held online.



### **IOWA HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH ASSOCIATION'S STATE INDIVIDUAL EVENT SPEECH CONTEST**

Manuela Rodriguez participated in the Iowa High School Speech Association's State Individual Event Speech Contest on Saturday, March 11 at Fort Dodge Senior High. She received a Division 1 rating at the District Contest on February 25 to advance. Manuela sang "Journey to the Past" from the musical, "Anastasia". She is the daughter of Pablo Rodriguez and Laura Miegge. Manuela is fourteen and a freshman at St. Edmond High School.

Manuela is a voice student of MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr. Her high school speech coach is Alyssa Sparks. Congratulations, Manuela!



### **IOWA HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH ASSOCIATION'S DISTRICT INDIVIDUAL EVENT SPEECH CONTEST**

Alyssa Speck and Manuela Rodriguez participated in the Iowa High School Speech Association's District Individual Event Speech Contest on Saturday, February 25 at Carroll Kuemper High School. They both participated in the musical theatre category. Alyssa sang, "I Cain't Say No" from the musical "Oklahoma". She is eighteen and the daughter of Pam Speck. Alyssa is a senior at Southeast Valley High School. Her high school speech coach is Britney Geisler.

Manuela sang "Journey to the Past" from the musical, "Anastasia". She is the daughter of Pablo Rodriguez and Laura Miegge. Manuela is fourteen and a freshman at St. Edmond High School. Her high school speech coach is Alyssa Sparks.

Alyssa and Manuela are voice students of MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr. Congratulations!



### **MUSICAL LEADS AND SUPPORTING ROLES**

Manuela Rodriguez was selected to play the supporting role of Mrs. Gloop in "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory" presented by St. Edmond High School on March 23-25. Manuela is the daughter of Pablo Rodriguez and Laura Miegge and a freshman at St. Edmond High School.

Performing the leading role of Mary Poppins in the Southeast Valley's High School Musical, "Mary Poppins" on November 4-5 was Alyssa Speck. She also choreographed the show. Alyssa is a senior at Southeast Valley High School and the daughter of Pam Speck.

Ian Olmos was selected to play the leading role of Little Red Riding Hood in the musical, "Into the Woods" presented at Humboldt High School on November 3-5. Ian is the daughter of Jesus Olmos and Zugey Venegas and a freshman at Humboldt High School.

Morgan Mayall played the supporting role of Jack's Mother in the Humboldt High School musical, "Into the Woods" on November 3-5. Morgan is a sophomore at Humboldt High School and the daughter of Frank & Tiffany Mayall.

Congratulations to all!



### UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COLLEGE VISIT

Alyssa Speck visited the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota on September 23. During this visit, Alyssa took a campus tour, performing arts tour, sat in on a voice lesson, had a meet and greet with Freshman Musical Theatre majors, met with music and theatre department faculty and the day culminated with the performance of “Eurydice” in the Knutson Theatre.

A special thank you to Daniel Blankenship for his help and support in coordinating this college visit to USD and being our host. She was accompanied on this visit by her voice instructor, MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr.

### SUMMER 2022 REFLECTIONS

It was an enjoyable summer working with singers during 8 weeks of voice lessons. My main emphasis in the summer is to have fun, work on stage presence and have opportunities to put into practice what we have learned throughout the year. This is encouraged through participation in area Bill Riley Talent Search Shows. Singers were able to perform in three (+) area Bill Riley Talent Search Shows including the Hamilton County Fair in Webster City, the Humboldt County Fair and the Emmet County Agricultural Show in Estherville. “I am thankful for all the life lessons singers learn through participation in area Bill Riley Talent Search Shows at both the local and state level. Singers learn to persevere and never give up, are provided with many opportunities to develop their stage presence, self-confidence, work ethic and ultimately the push to excel. They also learn how to conduct themselves in public with manners and respect being an integral part of the journey. The Bill Riley Talent Search is truly a wonderful program to nurture young singers.”

This summer, we had an outdoor Bill Riley Talent Show performance with a 102-degree heat index. Needless to say, hydration was the main topic of discussion that day. Singers also learned a lot about perseverance on that very hot July day. A special shout out to their families for all of their support this summer! Here are a few comments from singers participating in the Bill Riley Talent Shows: 1.) Keep on going even when you make a mistake. 2.) It's okay to be nervous. 3.) Just do it! 4.) This summer, I improved a lot with my facial expressions and stage presence. 5.) I enjoyed the car rides and getting to know other singers better. 6.) Don't worry about being nervous. Just learn to enjoy the experience. 7.) I enjoyed watching other performers perform.

A special thank you is extended to Anne Blankenship for her support in critiquing singers preparing for the Bill Riley Talent Shows. Anne was very encouraging and made wonderful suggestions on stage presence. Also, a huge shout out to my traveling companions, Michael Buhr and Michael Buhr for all of their support this summer!



### **HUMBOLDT COUNTY FAIR & HAMILTON COUNTY FAIR BILL RILEY TALENT SEARCH SHOWS**

Participating in the Humboldt County Fair and Hamilton County Fair Bill Riley Talent Search Shows on July 23-24 were four area singers including Alyssa Speck, Ian Olmos, Emily Scott and Vivian Speck. All learned many valuable music and life lessons with manners, respect and perseverance being an integral part of the journey. Alyssa sang "In My Dreams" from "Anastasia" in the Senior Division. Alyssa is seventeen years old and a senior at Southeast Valley High School. She is the daughter of Pam Speck. Also competing in the Senior Division was Ian. She is the daughter of Jesus Olmos & Zugey Venegas. Ian sang "Part of Your World" from "The Little Mermaid". She is fifteen years old and in 9th grade at Humboldt High School. Emily, the daughter of David & Jodi Scott competed in the Sprout Division. She sang "Colors of the Wind" from "Pocahontas" and was selected 3rd Place at the Hamilton County Bill Riley Talent Show. Emily is twelve years old and in 7th grade at St. Edmond Middle School. Vivian sang "Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo" from "Cinderella" in the Sprout Division. She is the daughter of Pam Speck. Vivian is eight years old and in 3rd grade at Southeast Valley Elementary School. This was the first time Ian, Emily and Vivian performed in area Bill Riley Talent Search Shows. All singers are voice students of MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr.



### **EMMET COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SHOW & MONROE COUNTY BILL RILEY TALENT SEARCH SHOWS**

Participating in the Emmet County Ag Show Bill Riley Talent Show on July 29 were Alyssa Speck, Ian Olmos and Vivian Speck. Participating in the Monroe County Bill Riley Talent Show on July 31 was Alyssa Speck. Alyssa sang "In My Dreams" from "Anastasia" in the Senior Division and placed third at the Emmet County Bill Riley Talent Show. She sang "Roxie" from "Chicago" at the Monroe County Bill Riley Talent Show and also placed third. Alyssa is seventeen and a senior at Southeast Valley High School. She is the daughter of Pam Speck. Also competing in the Senior Division was Ian. She is the daughter of Jesus Olmos & Zugey Venegas. Ian sang "Part of Your World" from "The Little Mermaid" and received 2nd place in the Emmet County Bill Riley Talent Show. She is fifteen years old and in 9th grade at Humboldt High School. Vivian sang "Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo" from "Cinderella" in the Sprout Division. She is the daughter of Pam Speck. Vivian is eight years old and in 3rd grade at Southeast Valley Elementary School. All singers are voice students of MaryAnn McSweeney-Buhr.