



PERFORMER—THEATER AND MUSIC

MEET **ANN MICHELS**, FSHS CLASS OF 1988, LEAD ACTOR IN TWIN CITIES THEATER, SINGER, AND EDUCATOR.

Ann Michels

Ann Michels has been a performer all her life. She recalls her mother saying that whenever Ann got yelled at, she'd start to cry and would meander over to a mirror to watch herself do it. Her mother would regularly say, "Oh, Annie. You are bound for the theater." Ann's career began with roles in *Little House* plays in elementary school, playing the role of the teacher, Miss Beadle. As a high school student, she had leading roles in musicals at Faribault High School. Even when she wasn't acting on stage, she still spent time in one spotlight or another. An athlete since she was little, she excelled in fast-pitch softball and gymnastics. "I honestly credit all those things as being my first performing. Standing in front of people in a little leotard, with judges sitting there, evaluating everything you do? It's a really good training ground," says Michels.

Following graduation from FHS, Ann entered The University of Minnesota-Morris, graduating with degrees in Theater, English, and Secondary Education. While at Morris, she studied opera, sang, and soloed in choir and jazz groups, acted in numerous theatrical productions, and played fast-pitch softball. College highlights include entertaining at New York's Carnegie Hall and at the Jazz Festival in Switzerland. In 2013, Ann was honored with the University of MN Distinguished Alumni Award for her noteworthy contributions. The presenter of the award stated, "I believe Ann exemplifies what we hope our graduates will do...be successful and happy in their work and humbly acknowledge people who were influential in their lives."

"I come from practical people, where theater was something I'd do because I needed to do it for my soul, but I would need to have a real job," Ann says. So, she began teaching 7th grade English and Theater Arts

and coaching gymnastics in Morris. She also began acting in impromptu performances and soloing with the prestigious George Maurer Jazz Group. When her voice coach encouraged a move to the Twin Cities for more opportunities, Ann did and never looked back. She eased her way into a variety of plays and theater until she began getting so many roles that she had to give up her job to devote herself full time to her chosen profession--the theater.

With her broad range of talents both as a comedic and dramatic actress who also dances, Ann has worked with over 25 Twin Cities theaters including The Guthrie, Chanhassen Dinner Theater, Ordway, Theater Latte Da, History Theater, Children's Theater, Old Log, and many other venues. She has often played the lead role, notably *Mary Poppins* in which she starred and danced in spite of a broken bone in her foot. Besides her time in the theater spotlight, Ann is devoted to educating others by teaching and coaching aspiring actors and singers.

Ann and her husband Matt, a musician, live in Minneapolis with their 2 rescue dogs and a cat. Ann's aunt relates that Ann "has a wonderful, warm, and engaging personality and is totally dedicated to each role she becomes." Ann credits her family, friends, and the Faribault community with inspiring her and supporting her through the years; she gratefully acknowledges many who continue to support her by attending her performances. Ann began her theatrical career in small Twin City venues and has built a reputation based on her talent, eagerness for hard work, and buoyant spirit. She is in the wonderful business of bringing joy to so many people and is living her life doing what she loves to do: performing.