



AMANDA THOMPSON Campers explored acting, film techniques and script writing during YAT's Film Production camp.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

TAKE TWO

YOUNG ACTORS THEATRE CAMPERS EXPLORE FILM PRODUCTION

AMANDA KARIOTH THOMPSON
COUNCIL ON CULTURE & ARTS

It was announced just a few weeks ago that homegrown actor Tony Hale had been nominated for a fifth Emmy Award. Widely recognized for his outstanding comedy work in "Arrested Development" and "Veep," Hale has already hoisted two of the golden statues and has been nominated for eight other major awards. Vocal about his local roots as a student at Young Actors Theatre, he publicly credits the organization for much of his success on the large and small screens.



Natalie Futrell, YAT's company manager, said, "I hear stories that Tony was a cut up and crazy on the stage but then he found his niche in film." YAT is betting that film will suit other emerging artists and they offer year-round classes through their Film and Television Division, for which Hale serves as a consultant. Additionally, local children have the opportunity to explore acting and film techniques, script writing, and editing during YAT's week long Film Production summer camp.

"Some kids are like, 'singing isn't my strongest point and I don't like dancing but I'm really interested in acting. I don't want to be onstage in front of 216 people but I'd love to work on a different type of acting,'" said Futrell. For the past two summers, YAT has offered that option to middle and high school age campers. Led by instructors Gina Jordan Hupp and Katie Seitzinger,

See Theatre, Page 3C



AMANDA THOMPSON

Young Actors Theatre campers worked collaboratively to create an original script.

Theatre

Continued from Page 1C

nearly two dozen campers dug deep to find their inner scoundrel in keeping with this year's theme of Disney villains.

Thirteen-year-old Anna Hickey is a year-round "Yattie" and she attended the film production camp last summer. Back again to expand her knowledge, Hickey was excited about her role as Maleficent even though this wicked godmother was a far cry from her natural personality. "I try to be nice in real life but it's been fun to portray a different type of character."

Another exercise that stretched her artistically was developing the screenplay. "Writing was a little different than what we're used to. We usually get a script and learn the lines but it was nice to write the whole script for ourselves. We all know what's going to happen and it's our own touch on the story."

Instructor Katie Seitzinger wrote an outline for the screenplay and then encouraged the campers to come up with their own ideas for fleshing out their mischievous characters. "The good thing about these villains is that no one actually hates them because they're so bad it's funny," laughed Seitzinger. "They go through all of these dramatic, extensive, evil plans and they never work so I hope that the kids understand that it's easier to be nice than it is to be mean."

Along with kindness, Seitzinger hopes to emphasize the concept of trust and she does so in a way that may seem surprising. Villains and battles go hand in hand and stage combat factored heavily into the camp. Sword play, pratfalls, and choreographed slaps and punches were peppered throughout the scenes. Making these illusions believable takes considerable skill and timing as well as clear communication and a commitment to safety.

"Stage combat is the only thing that I am super strict about," said Seitzinger. "This is all about trust, you have to maintain eye contact the whole time, you can't get too excited. They practice it in slow motion until they trust each other and I feel they're safe enough. Then I let them practice with an adult watching while I move on to the next group. They have a blast doing it."

Captain Hook is an infamous swordsman and 13-year-old Cameron Greene played him with confidence. Though Hook's a larger than life character, Cameron understands that film demands a nuanced performance. "When you're on stage, everything has to be way over the top because the person in the way back can't really see you. With the camera, it's right in front of you so you've got to dial it down."

Film also allows for the real-time revision and refinement that the stage doesn't. This is one of the benefits that draws 12-year-old JP Evans to the medium. He's an aspiring director and he often has a clear vision for the projects he participates in. "Film allows you to show the best you. In live theater, and don't get me wrong, I love live theater, every time you do it



PHOTOS BY AMANDA THOMPSON

Katie Seitzinger reviews the script with a camper.

there's a chance for it to get messed up and that's what the audience is going to see. In film, you can do as many takes as you want."

JP points out another advantage. "In live theater, you would have to have all of your lines memorized and you block everything, whereas with this, it's run a few lines, block that scene, and shoot it. It's shorter and it's memorizing in small increments rather than the whole script."

Reflecting on his experience, JP points out that much of what he's learned at YAT relates to collaboration and empathy. "When you're a teenager, it's an awkward stage of life. Doing something you're passionate about with other people who are passionate about it gives you confidence that you're not alone. There are other people that like the same things as you do. Film is something that I've grown to love and it could absolutely turn into a lifelong career."

There's little question that Tony Hale would agree.

Amanda Karioth Thompson is the Assistant Director for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).



Katie Seitzinger demonstrates a choreographed sword play stance.



Wigs and headpieces helped the characters come alive.



There's nothing common about NFC

- Fully-Accredited
- 3K - 12th grade
- Celebrating 50 Years of excellence in education
- Weekly Chapel Programs
- Dual Enrollment for Juniors & Seniors

850-386-6327 ext. 195
nflschool.org

