

Taking the STAGE

Taylor High School alumni, Randi Garza, is chasing her theatre dreams and making a name for herself in Atlanta as the leading lady in *Evita*

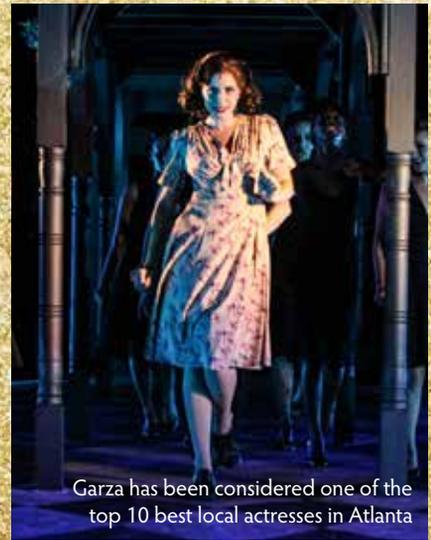
Written by Kennan Buckner | Photography by BreeAnne Clowdus



Randi Garza has performed in other productions such as the *Rocky Horror Show* and *Bull Durham*



Garza received a Suzi Bass nomination for outstanding lead actress for her performance in *Evita*



Garza has been considered one of the top 10 best local actresses in Atlanta

Professional theatre has become the new home of former Katyite and 2009 graduate of Taylor High School (THS), Randi Garza. “I get paid to dress up in costumes and tell stories. Sometimes, I am lucky enough to change someone’s life,” says Garza. The crazy rush she gets on stage invigorates her soul. “There are so many ways to describe it, but the stage is my home. I try to share my story with an audience as best as I can.”

Randi Garza was recently awarded the 2015 Critics Pick for best actress by Creative Loafing Atlanta

“I have had an overwhelming amount of support in this area of my life. Sometimes I don't know if I deserve it all, but I am very grateful.”

-Randi Garza



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In her most recent role as leading lady Eva Perón in *Evita*, Garza found new inspiration and strength as a woman. “Eva Perón spoke to me like no other role I have played,” says Garza. The production tells the story of Perón, the Argentinian who served as First Lady until her death in 1952. “She came from nothing, her father was out of the picture, and she rose to stardom and almost lead a nation in her late 20s.” Garza hopes other girls can learn from Perón’s example as she did.

SINGING AND DANCING

Garza joined her first theatre class in the sixth grade. “Theatre at that young of an age was simply a way I could be around kids who didn’t think I was weird. We were all a little weird and having way too much fun,” says Garza.

She continued by joining choir, theatre, and ComedySportz while at THS. “It never occurred to me that this was something I could do professionally. That revelation came much later.” Participating in all three extracurricular activities at once cultivated Garza into the kind of well-rounded actresses Serenbe Playhouse looks for.

MORE THAN A HOBBY

She realized theatre could be a career option while attending a three-week intensive musical theatre camp at Oklahoma City University. “They were doing *Sweeney Todd* that year, and I went in with little to no expectations for a role. I ended up playing Mrs. Lovett, and it changed everything,” says Garza. “I always knew I had fun with theatre, but I never considered myself a leading lady,” says Garza. “Out of 50 or so high schoolers from all over the country, the director saw something in me that helped me realize theatre was more than my hobby.”

THE SELF-CONFIDENCE TO SHINE

While those in the spotlight often experience the joy of an audience’s applause, Garza says it can be tough to maintain a healthy self-image in the professional industry. “I struggled in college with feeling like I wasn’t good enough and as a result was not good to myself,” shares Garza. She is now very open with other young women about the dangers of poor body image. “It took me a while to get there, and it wasn’t easy, but health and happiness go hand-in-hand. I can now say I have both.”

Garza hopes to travel more and maybe work at a theatre overseas, or as a cruise-line performer. “This isn’t an easy line of work. You will be broke. You will work three jobs at once,” says Garza who is a nanny, coffee shop barista, and weekend dog walker who spends evenings at rehearsals. “The initiative to take control of your life and get out of bed for a 16-hour day is 90% of the workload,” shares Garza. “But if you really love it, none of that will matter.” **KM**

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