

# Local girl comes home to sing for 'Taffetas'

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**W**ant to knock your socks off? You can. There is a chance to journey back through time and to even arrive back to the fabulous 50s. That was the era when angora sweaters were hot and poodle skirts were in. Hula-Hoops were spinning everywhere and the sounds of tunes like these — "Mr. Sandman," "Johnny Angel" and "You Belong to Me" — permeated the airwaves.



**Joani Foster**  
*View from St. Charles*

"The Taffetas" is going on right now at Pheasant Run, and a young woman who grew up in St. Charles is starring in it. Courtney Rioux plays one of four sisters hailing from Muncie, Ind., who have

formed a quartet. They're determined to sing their way into national television. The show is reminiscent of the Lawrence Welk Show (bubble machine included) with their band, led by cousin Rickey.

Courtney got the "bug" back in 1993 when her brother was dancing at Copeland Dance Academy. A shy little girl, she had declared "no way to the stage."

Sitting in the audience at her brother's first recital, something happened. She was watching pretty little girls in white dresses dance to "Amazing Grace" and the bashful Courtney got over her fear of being watched by

other parents and siblings. She turned to her Mom, Martha, and said "OK, I want to do this!"

At that moment her desire to perform became stronger than her fear. I believe we all have that instant in time and more than once.

When we seize it, we realize more of a life well-lived. Courtney did just that... and at a very tender age.

She remembers it did a lot for her self-growth as she took dance and voice and starred in plays and musicals at school and in the community.

Courtney already knew she wanted to be an actress from the time she starred in her first role at St. Charles High School (before the schools became East and North). She was Charity, the

preacher's daughter, in the "Saloon's Keeper's Daughter."

When asked about the payoffs and the downside of performance, she said, "Plays and musicals can be very physical, so it's always good for the body to be active, and of course doing what you love is good for the soul."

"To get paid for what you love is even better," Courtney said. "Making people laugh is my greatest joy in life. It can be hard emotionally, too. To audition so much and be told no a lot of the time can be stressful and hard on your self image, but you just have to realize that it's part of your job. It's like being in sales; you have to hear so many no's before you hear one yes."

On stage are plenty of

opportunities for embarrassing moments, and Courtney courageously gave me one:

"One performance of 'The Taffetas', in my very first entrance, I tripped up the stairs and I had to make myself look like I meant to do it. I wasn't even wearing my stilettos at that time; I had my flats on."

When asked about her accomplishments, she said, "Just seeing all the smiles on the faces of the people who grew up in that era feels like an accomplishment."

When they are either singing along or mouthing the words, it's like we get to take them back in time for an evening. As our audience is interactive and vocal in their enjoyment, it makes the show even better. We all

have more fun knowing they are having a great time."

Courtney went to Illinois State University for her acting degree and got a small scholarship, winning the Jean Schafenbug award in her senior year.

Courtney teaches kids acting and on-camera classes at the Green

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Room Studio, an actor's studio in Chicago, as well as private classes.

She will be teaching a boot camp at Noble Fool's kids program on March 30 at Pheasant Run. There will also be a one-day class for musical theater at the musicology studio in mid-April.

There is a part in the show where Courtney talks to the audience,

and she loves it. Maybe she will someday host a talk show. Be the next Ryan Seacrest? I know she is going places.

In the meantime get yourself out of the gloom and doom of today's world and sit back, listen to some good old-fashioned music and laugh your troubles away.

That is advice from Courtney, and I second the motion. Do hurry, because the show is only playing until April 11.

For tickets, call the box office number at 630-584-6342; visit [www.pheasantrun.com](http://www.pheasantrun.com) or [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)

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