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Alumni Profile

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Singing her way across the country

Some might say Jazmin Gorsline '99 has multiple personalities... and all of them love to sing.

Gorsline has played Lili in *Carnival*, Laurey in *Oklahoma*, Julie in *Carousel* and Luisa in *The Fantasticks*. Now as Eliza Doolittle, her persona has expanded yet again.

Gorsline is the understudy for the lead role in *My Fair Lady*, the legendary musical currently presented by the National Theatre of Great Britain. She is also performing in the ensemble, and by June, when the 10-month U.S. tour is complete, she will have performed the show 328 times in 20 states.

"It is the most challenging and rewarding role I have ever prepared for, with the different dialects and transformation Eliza makes from the beginning to the end of the show," she said. "Everyone thinks of this show as a story of Henry Higgins turning a flower girl into a lady, but in reality the true story is how she changes Henry Higgins' life. It is written so well and there is so much you can do with the role."

For Gorsline, who set her sights on a career in opera as a child, the experience is a dream come true. Linfield reinforced her vision, providing Gorsline with vocal training that has prepared her well for her career. She said Gwen Leonard, professor of music, was instrumental in laying her technical music foundation.

"The entire music department provided such a welcoming environment in which to learn and grow and explore," she said. "Now, when I'm up there performing, the musical aspects and singing aren't something I have to think about. I prepare, but then I rely on instinct and training."

As a Linfield student, Gorsline appeared in Opera Workshop scenes from *The Medium* and *Die Fledermaus*, and earned a master's from the Eastman School of Music in New York, auditioning for musical theatre productions between studies.

"I began to realize that it was possible to have a career in musical theatre and that was what would make me the happiest," she said.

Gorsline has performed steadily over the past few years. Her big break came this year, when she was cast as the standby for the lead role of Lili in *Carnival*, Gorsline's all-time favorite show, at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. *My Fair Lady* followed.



Jazmin Gorsline '99, right, performs in the ensemble to "I Could Have Danced All Night" during a production of Lerner & Loewe's *My Fair Lady*. Also pictured, from left, are Dana Delisa and Lisa O'Hare.

Leonard is not surprised by Gorsline's success. She said Gorsline performed graduate-level repertoire in her senior recital, a result of her self-motivation and creativity.

"When Jazmin sings, there's something unique about her tone that makes people listen," Leonard said. "In terms of her intellect and talent, she was an outstanding singer, always interested in making what she was doing better."

Although the tour of *My Fair Lady* is just getting started, Gorsline welcomes the exhausting activity and the exhilaration ahead.

"I think my favorite part will be exploring the different cities and seeing how different audiences respond to the show each night," she said. "So far, audiences have been wonderful, and I'm very excited to see what lies ahead."

— Laura Davis