



Character development

Amber Redmond auditions for the RRT production of 'Agnes of God'

by [Blake Hannon](#)

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There are nearly a dozen women of varying ages and backgrounds at the Robidoux Landing Playhouse on an uncharacteristically warm January night, and they all want to be someone else.

Each one is auditioning for one of three roles in the upcoming Robidoux Resident Theatre production of “Agnes of God,” which opens on Feb. 29.

Amber Redmond, a 21-year-old “born-and-bred” St. Joseph resident and Missouri Western State University theater student, is hoping to land the title role of Agnes. But first, everyone has to warm up — director’s orders.

This is fine with Ms. Redmond, who says actors do warm-ups “so we’re not robotronic when we get on stage.”

With the director and his two assistants on stage leading, the women are instructed to stretch their arms to the sky and thrust their bodies to the ground for a rubbery toe touch. As Ms. Redmond’s knuckles drag the floor, she, along with the other women, slowly rise to attention, like human balloons being inflated.

They will follow this by making circles with their arms, forcefully yawning and a vocal exercise the director describes as “monkeys jumping into the pool of your stomach,” which makes Ms. Redmond hold her hand up to her mouth to keep from laughing.

With numbers pinned to their clothing, women are called up to read for different parts by the director.

“65, Livingston.” “63, Mother Superior.”

Ms. Redmond’s number, 51, is called to read for Agnes. She asks the director if she can use the chair sitting stage left, the first request to use a prop in these auditions. When she sits down with her lines resting in her lap, her already young countenance becomes instantly younger through her eyes and facial expressions. She physically, vocally and emotionally captures the fear and anger of a tortured young child. For what has been designated a “cold read,” there is nothing frigid about it.

Ms. Redmond will later be called up for an interview in front of the other women and the director. During that interview, she describes the character of Agnes as a “puppy” she wants to take care of. When asked to recall a painful moment in her life, tears emerge when conjuring up the memory of a broken engagement. She also describes her struggles with faith and how she has a hard time going into church.

Before warm-ups, the play’s director described how he wanted to use the “Lee Strasburg approach” for actors to channel their own personal pain along with their acting skills into the characters. Based on this audition, it appears that Amber Redmond has something to work with.