

Truman alum pens indie film

Alumnus works with Kirksville resident to bring independent film to town

BY NATALIE CARBERY
Staff Reporter

Truman State alumnus Nick Toti is bringing his independent film, "You Are Your Body/You Are Not Your Body" to campus for a special showing March 26.

According to the "You Are Your Body/You Are Not Your Body" Kickstarter fundraising web page, the movie tells the story of the Evans family, an unhappy family from Texas who has been estranged for a decade. After the death of Dinah Evans, her four children reunite. As tensions rise for the children, a mysterious woman and her cult of devoted followers come to offer salvation.

Toti and his friend Matt Latham co-wrote "You Are Your Body/You Are Not Your Body." Although the pair has written other projects together, "You Are Your Body/You Are Not Your Body" is their longest project yet, Toti said.

Toti is a preschool teacher in Austin, Texas. He graduated from the Masters in Education program at Truman during 2010. Toti earned his Bachelor's degree in education during

2006. Toti said his spare money goes toward making films.

"Some people spend money on food or a car," Toti said. "I eat brown rice, beans and apples. And Taco Bell. \$2,000 came from Matt, I gave \$6,000, and the rest came from calling in favors."

According to the film's Kickstarter page, 117 people donated money to help Latham and Toti reach their \$8,000 goal.

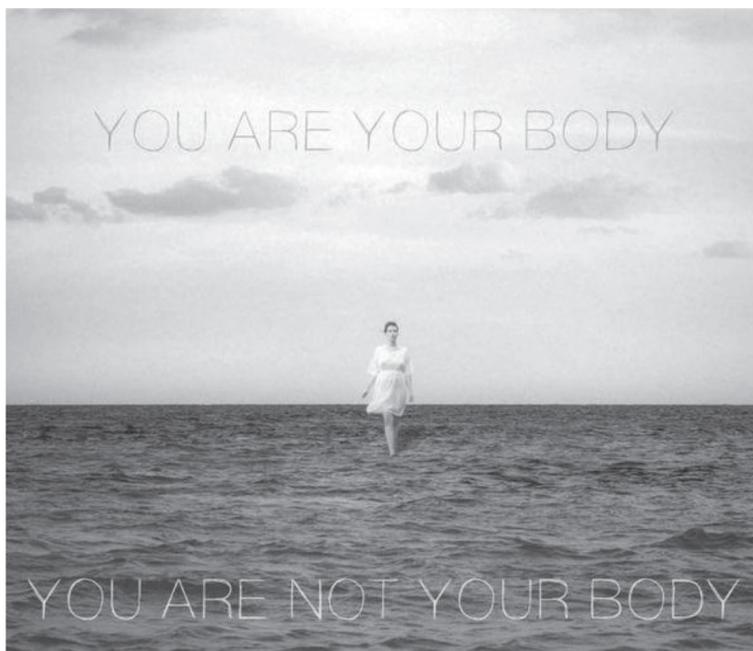
According to Indie Wire, "You Are Your Body/You Are Not Your Body" won project of the week by popular vote Sept. 23, 2013.

A group of Kirksville residents who call themselves the Inner Circle are looking to open an independent movie theater in Pickler's Famous, and are promoting the showing of Toti's film. The Inner Circle consists of some professors as well as the Kirksville Arts Association, said Dereck Daschke, philosophy and religion professor.

"We want it to be for the town, by the people of the town," Daschke said. "We are hoping to provide a forum where people can see the movie together."

While the theater would benefit the whole Kirksville community, Daschke said he has found academic merit in it as well.

"Film is one of the most accessible forms of art," Daschke said. "Independent films take certain risks ... challenging my think-



Submitted Photo

The movie poster for "You Are Your Body/You Are Not Your Body." Truman alumnus Nick Toti wrote the screenplay.

ing. I also want to bring in documentaries, in particular the indie movie "Bully."

The French government donated to the former international film club at Truman. While the club showed movies from across the world, there was a quota of French films that had to be shown as well, Daschke said.

While Kirksville currently does not have many international films available, the Inner Circle is attempting to change that, Daschke

said. If they are able to get their independent theater running, international films will be made available to Truman students and Kirksville citizens.

"[Kirksville is] a quirky place," Daschke said. "A quirky place needs some quirky films."

This special showing of "You Are Your Body/You Are Not Your Body" at Truman will be 7:30 p.m. March 26 in Ophelia Parish 2210.

Theatre course gives experience

BY ANNA SELLE
Staff Reporter

Truman State's Advanced Studies and Projects in Theatre course allows students to pursue specific interests within their areas of academic interest. The course varies from semester to semester, reflecting the interests of the students enrolled. One of the courses offered for the spring 2014 semester is a collaborative project between several students to create an entire musical performance. Junior Haley Edgerton is the scene designer for the production this semester.

Anna Selle: What is your job for the Advanced Studies and Projects in theatre class production?

Haley Edgerton: My job is to design the set based on suggestions by the script and also the director and to make that come to life.

AS: What is a jukebox musical?
HE: It means that we've taken songs from other shows and melded them into our own storyline. This story is kind of a love triangle between two main characters that are sisters, and another man who I won't reveal much about. It's about them finding themselves and their love interest after their father's death.

AS: How did you get involved with the show?

HE: The director, Brendan Dabbs, approached me and asked

if I wanted to do scene design because he knew that it's something I'm looking into as a career. He and I both agreed it would be a good resume builder for me. So he asked if I would do scene design, and I said yes, absolutely.

AS: An academic class is producing this show. How is the class structured?

HE: I think it's different than a lot of 481 classes that have ever happened here. It's not structured like a typical class. We don't have class periods that we have to go to at a set day and at a set time. We just have deadlines that we have to meet. My final scene design had to be done by the end of midterm break, and moving forward we have to

build that. So beyond that, what was really cool was that we all got to choose how many credit hours we wanted or needed to get out of it. We could go up to three, but could have even done it for no credit if we wanted to.

AS: What are the challenges you've faced trying to design the set for the show?

HE: Communication was a big problem, in terms of what resources we were allowed to use. I have to reevaluate what I can do with the set. We can't use any of the lighting instruments in the Black Box Theater, so I'm working in lamps and things like that into the scene design. We're relying on funding from the Independence Performance and Art

Coalition and other scholarships that Brendan has applied for and looked in to. Funding is a challenge for every show, but for this one especially.

AS: What are the advantages of working on a show like this?

HE: It's actually really cool, because we can do whatever we want. Whatever is in the bounds of our abilities we are able to do, we can use our creativity and really experiment with all kinds of things, so it'll be really interesting to see how everything plays out.

The Theatre 481 Class Production will be performed April 25 and 26 in the Black Box Theater in Ophelia Parrish.

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