

# Miranda Cashman

## *Mixing a Love of Acting & Writing with a Passion for Math and Science*



Concord's Miranda Cashman is an accomplished actor and an award-winning writer – who also shares a passion for math and science.

She's a talented writer, who creates award-winning short stories, plays, poems and essays, including one published in the recent Scholastic Art & Writing Awards anthology, "The Best Teen Writing of 2013."

A skilled actress, she takes on roles from Shakespeare to Broadway musicals to Gilbert & Sullivan operettas. She also maintains a 4.0 average in honors classes at Middlesex, serves as a Commonwealth Honors Student Ambassador, and tutors classmates in Professor Joanna DelMonaco's "Trigonometry for Engineering & Science" class.

Cashman could be arrogant about her success. Instead, she seems unaffected by all she's accomplished, saying simply, "I'm an independent learner who enjoys exploring many things."

Born in China, Cashman was adopted as an infant by Christina Cashman, a Concord attorney. "Mom always wanted a child and went to China to adopt me, after her husband died. She raised me on her own, and we've always been close," she said.

Her mother encouraged her to explore many educational opportunities, including becoming a Middlesex Dual Enrollment Academy student. The program gives motivated high school students

the chance to earn college credits. At age 16, Cashman enrolled in intermediate algebra courses at MCC.

Now 18, she carries a full course load at Middlesex and is on track to graduate with an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts & Sciences with a Physical Science Concentration in May, days after turning 19. She plans to major in geology at UMass Amherst in September.

Besides her mother, Cashman credits other fine teachers, including those at Middlesex, with encouraging her love of learning. And, she believes being home-schooled since ninth grade has helped her excel in acting, writing, math and science. "Home schooling let me work at my own pace and study subjects I was interested in," she said.

Cashman polished her acting chops with the All the World's A Stage Players, a Chelmsford-based youth Shakespearean theater company for home-schooled students. From 2009-2012, she acted in and worked as production assistant on several plays, including "Hamlet," in which she played the lead. She was worked on sets and makeup, helped direct fight scenes, and researched, collected and distributed educational materials on the plays for other students. "I've loved acting since I was 6 and All the World's a Stage enhanced that love," said Cashman.

She has also worked with the Concord Players, Vokes Players, Turtle Lane Playhouse, Citi Performing Arts Center Shubert Theatre and Sudbury Savoyards. Her other roles include Caliban in "The Tempest," Prince Hal in "Henry IV, Part One," Portia in "The Merchant of Venice," Puck in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and Isabel in "Pirates of Penzance."

But Hamlet remains her favorite role. "The character is so rich – I loved finding sympathetic things in him and making him come alive," she said.

Cashman's writing talents were evident early on, as well. Since 2004, she has received numerous awards for poetry, essays, short stories, plays, and creative nonfiction. The most recent in 2013 was a National Silver Medal from Scholastic for her Senior Writing Portfolio, which included a short script, fiction and science-fiction pieces, and personal and persuasive essays. She traveled to New York's Carnegie Hall last May for the awards ceremony.

The persuasive essay from her portfolio, titled "The Asian Misrepresentation: How Stereotypes of Asians in the Media Harm America," was written for Stephanie Pesce's honors "English Composition" class and is published in the "Best Teen Writing" anthology. Pesce helped Cashman edit her work for the contest.



"Miranda is one of the most diverse individuals I have ever encountered, exemplifying the traits of intellectual curiosity and civic responsibility that we value so highly in our students," said Pesce. "I am most impressed by the fact that she is as passionate and curious about theater and the arts, as she is about the physical sciences, reflecting a multi-talented and inspired young woman."

Writing and acting always came easily, but Cashman's math and science skills blossomed at Middlesex. "I always liked math and science, but never had the right teachers," she said. "With home schooling and my classes at MCC, I gravitated toward those subjects."

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*Stephanie Pesce  
Adjunct Professor of English*

Besides Pesce and DelMonaco, other Middlesex faculty members who have helped her include Theater Professor Karen Oster and Science Professor Kevan Murphy.

"Professor Oster helped me learn a lot about contemporary theater, which is much different than Shakespeare," she said. Cashman is taking Murphy's "Introduction to Geology" class this semester and relishes learning from a geologist. "I've studied it informally to get familiar with the language. But having a geologist as a teacher will help me towards my goals in science," she said.

Middlesex has richly rewarded Cashman, who has been awarded two MCC Foundation Scholarships, and an International Education Fellowship to China this summer. "I have not been to China since I was adopted and would love the experience, just as I've loved every experience at MCC," she said.

As a geology student at UMass Amherst, she plans to focus on "doing good for the planet and exploring how it has changed over millions of years." But her love for writing and theater will remain important, too. "I may even do a double major in theater," she said.

And for a talented multi-tasker like Miranda Cashman, that goal is well within her reach.

*– Nancye Tuttle*

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