

Budding Aurora actress prepares for NBC debut



By Brock Weir

Having used her skills as a debater to take on the world, Aurora's Natalie Ganzhorn is well-versed in being in front of an audience.

Despite many years of experience, and a few trophies to prove it, however, the Country Day School (CDS) student is not quite sure what to expect when perhaps her highest profile role to date plays before a much wider audience stateside on NBC this summer.

Ganzhorn, who starts Grade 11 at CDS in September, finished a guest shot on the Canadian-American sitcom *Working the Engels*, starring actress Andrea Martin earlier this year. The 13-episode first season of the show aired on Global TV this spring and made its American debut on the *Peacock Network* last Thursday.

In her guest-shot, Natalie portrays an aspiring lawyer named Tracy, who has always found an idol in Jenna Engel, played by Kacey Rohl. For the uninitiated, *Working the Engels* follows a down and out family joining forces in unlikely ways to keep their late patriarch's law firm afloat after he left them swimming in debt.

In the pilot episode, Jenna quits her job at a high profile law firm with a flourish, and finds herself back in the family business much to the chagrin of Tracy, in a later episode.

Jenna comes to the school to give a presentation and Tracy was just over the moon excited about getting to meet her idol, explains Natalie. *She is very intense and passionate about everything she does, so when she first meets Jenna she kind of explodes at her, so excited to meet her. When she learns Jenna is no longer working for this major law firm, she has a complete meltdown. She is devastated and, because she is so intense and dramatic, she overreacts to everything and it is an emotional rollercoaster.*

Without giving too much away for people who might not have seen it on Global the first time around, Tracy later joins the Engels at their firm but *things don't necessarily turn out for the best.*

When the episode aired in Canada, Natalie says she had a lot of great feedback from her family and friends, which was especially meaningful as the character was well outside her comfort zone.

It was so fun to be able to play that and the response from my friends was really fun because I didn't tell them much about my character, so it was really great to hear people's feedback of me playing a character very different from myself, she says. *[This*

time, on NBC] it will be a bit different because I will be getting reviews and responses from people I don't know. It will be really interesting to hear the responses from a wider audience. It is a little bit intimidating because I don't know what they'll think, but it is really exciting and cool I am going to be on American television and a show I am a part of is going to be airing on such a huge platform.?

It is safe to say that Natalie Ganzhorn has been truly bitten by the acting bug. As an award-winning member of Country Day School's debating team, she has always had aspirations of being a lawyer. She still holds that dream, but her game plan has slightly shifted.

She still aims to go to university after high school, and then to law school, but seeking opportunities to follow her passion for acting as well.

She first found herself on the stage, rather than behind the podium, playing the Ghost of Christmas Present in her school's production of A Christmas Carol, auditioning after being encouraged by teacher Scott Garbe, to give acting a try. Additional roles followed in ?Godspell? and other CDS productions, but by the time she was in middle school she had secured an agent and manager and a long string of auditions followed.

Following up on ?Working the Engels,? she is spending her summer vacation working on a Canadian-produced sitcom geared towards kids, and waiting to hear back on whether a feature film she completed last year has been accepted to premiere this September at the Toronto International Film Festival.

It has been a steep learning curve for Natalie, but she says there were lessons aplenty as soon as she stepped onto the Engels set with seasoned veterans like Andrea Martin and Eugene Levy, as well as 90210's Jason Priestly, who was on hand soaking up the atmosphere of the set preparing to direct the following episode.

?They brought so much energy to the set and I really feel like I learned a lot from working with them,? she says. ?Comedy is a lot about timing and working on how to hit the jokes, and just being on set and observing Andrea's incredible comedic timing, I was able to learn a lot about that. Just talking with them about their experience in the industry and getting words of encouragement from them was such an incredible experience, and it was overwhelming to be on set with people I look up to as an actress.

?I learned to be confident on set and just to feel comfortable bringing your own ideas to the show. Before that, I was kind of reserved when I was on set and one of the main things I learned from Andrea was to be comfortable bringing your own ideas to the set. She would collaborate with the writers and directors when they were on set and it really made such differences in the scene.?