

Josephine Geisler



Born and raised in Colorado, Josephine relocated to Shanghai in September 2013. At SCIS, she participates in the dance company and formerly sang in choir. Even though she is getting ready to graduate and in the middle of exams, I got her to sit down with me...

Serious question: is dance a sport?

Dance is absolutely a sport! Dance is an extremely difficult discipline to master. Being a great dancer takes a tremendous amount of endurance, strength, flexibility, balance, and control (mentally and physically). A truly excellent dancer can very well have more athleticism than a superb football, basketball, or hockey player, while also looking pretty while they're doing what would be considered to be intense, difficult, and rigorous workouts to some athletes. It's definitely a sport; it's not even an argument!

And one thing you do with your dance is a Aerial Acrobats. Do you think traditional athletes appreciate how much body control/strength/ coordination that takes?

I think it kind of depends. A lot of athletes don't really seem to be fully aware of it. Everybody's understanding varies a lot from person to person. However, even if people have trouble understanding how much athleticism is required of us, I never really feel like it's under-appreciated. We definitely get a lot of respect for our disciplines.

How did you even get started into that?

I started to do circus work in primary school. During that time my specialties were wheels and spheres, so I learned how to globe-walk and unicycle. I actually still unicycle and it's one of my favourite ways to get around my hometown. As I started to explore more, I started to become interested in manipulation acts, or juggling, but that didn't quite satisfy me completely. Then I started thinking about aerial acrobatics and really felt like it would suit me well, so about three years ago I found a place to train where I specialized in aerial fabric, and worked in a handful of small shows in an acrobatic troupe before moving here. I also did a little work on both static and low-flying trapeze, rope, net and hoop. I've tried most of it, but my love is definitely fabric. I love how expressive it is. I love that in circus there is always a balance between being artistic, being athletic, being ridiculously weird, and doing the impossible.

Rumor has it you are also quite musical. You play the piano and sing. You even had a performance. Tell me about your musical side.

I play piano, sing, and also play guitar. I just grew up in a very musical family. My relatives all have absolutely tremendous amounts of musical talent and so I was raised to love it and explore it along with the rest of them. I do music for almost the exact same reasons that I do circus. Music is a great artistic and

emotional outlet. I do feel like music is a language that is worth mastering because people will always understand it- it evokes feelings, it can communicate messages, and tell stories. I love music and hope to study some theory and composition in University.

So...what's the future looking like? Do you have a university in mind? And on a scale of 1-10...how terrified is your dad you might run off and join a circus with your interests and skill set?

The future is looking really good! The university that I've selected for this coming fall is Biola University in La Miranda, CA. I plan to study there for a year and just refresh after a year spent in China. During that year I will also be training very hard on my acrobatic work, so by the end of that year, my hope is to get into Le Centre National des Arts du Cirque in France where I can earn my BA in Circus Arts with a concentration in Aerial Fabric. As for my dad, as fun as it would be to say that I'm being rebellious and going against his will, my dad has actually been very supportive, and he is the one who suggested to me that I get my BA in Circus Arts somewhere. So I'm really grateful for that.

5 Years from now, where do you see yourself?

I'm hoping that in 5 years I'll just be graduating with my BA in Circus Arts. At that point I hope to do work for a larger circus company. My favourite circus is Cirque Eloize, so it would be a dream to get to work there straight out of circus school. That's my goal! But basically I plan to just do what I have to do until my body is shot and can't do acrobatics anymore, then I'll just go back to university and work more on music!

Thinking back to before you began at SCIS, did you think you would have the type of experience you actually had?

I really had no idea! I always thought that I would just be graduating from high school in my hometown, and upon finding out that I would be taking my senior year here, I didn't know what to expect at all! I knew that it was going to be an adventure, but even my wildest dreams didn't quite match the life that I've found myself living right now. It really just goes to show how quickly plans can change and how sometimes expectations don't meet reality, and that's a good thing.

So what has your experience at SCIS been like coming in just for your final, senior, year?

Answer: It's been pretty crazy! There's been a lot of stress and it's been a lot of work, but I really enjoyed the friends I've made, the experience I've had, and the reward of just getting to learn in such a cool place, so I think it's absolutely worth it to have been here.

By **JONATHAN PAULSON**
SCIS-HIS Communications Officer