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JOSH JASZEWSKI - THEATERGOER EXTRAORDINAIRE

With his long, black Dr. Who coat, striped scarf, leather hat and trailing ponytail, Josh Jaszewski is a familiar figure to many Milwaukeeans as he strides down sidewalks twirling his "devil sticks" (he's never without them). In theater circles, he's also familiar. Mathematician, juggler and thinker, Jaszewski, 36, is a one-man audience institution. Producers and actors nod to each other when they hear his laughter: "Josh is here."



Why the devil sticks?

I use them waiting for the bus, walking and relaxing. I enjoy them.

You teach college math?

I'm a lecturer in the math department at UWM and MATC. I have a master's degree—I'm not into wealth and power. I'm not interested in fooling around with a Ph.D. and delving into higher math. One can become unhinged. The play *Proof* is not that far off.

What is your history with theater?

The first play I remember seeing was *Sleepy Hollow* in grade school at St. Veronica's in Bay View. I saw *Sweeney Todd* with Charmayne de Noyer in high school. Absolutely stunning. But I really got started when I was studying at UWM. The PTP [Professional Theater Training Program] was doing *Miss Julie* and *Three Sisters* in rotating rep... I fell in love.

Other favorite theater experiences?

The Rep's *The Tavern* was such an extraordinary show I saw it three times. I love Combat Theatre and save the dates. Renaissance did a great play called *Day-Trips* ... I loved Carol Zippel as Masha in *Three Sisters* ... Once Gerard Nugent had a line in a play called *Fortinbras*: "Don't talk to me about metaphysics; I've been sleeping with a dead woman." I love that line.

How many plays do you see?

At peak season, five or six a week. In winter, less. I go to Next Act, Off the Wall, The Rep, Chamber Theatre, Renaissance, Carte Blanche, Youngblood, Soulstice, In Tandem, Skylight, Alchemist, UWM, Windfall, Boulevard (I have a "lifetime" ticket!)... They're all on my bus line.

What is it about theater you love?

One of the things about humanity is learning from the past. I've been entertained and instructed about facts or emotional truths. I've learned about mistakes I didn't want to make, especially in Shakespeare. I've had an easier time because of this. Even in my marriage.

You are newly married?

Two and a half years ago. She was on a bus, saw me walking down the street with my "sticks" and rapped on the window. We started dating through a mutual friend. I took her to *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, and then *Patience* at the Skylight.

Neither of you drive. Why?

Economics. We lead a lifestyle above our income because we don't own a car. I figure we save about ten thousand a year. I take the Green Line, from home in Bay View to the East Side and Downtown. It's all I need.

What if you wanted to go to Bayshore Mall?

There's nothing for me at Bayshore.

photograph courtesy of Shepherd Express