

MEET THE *Model*



Waterloo's Andrew Dolson fell into modelling in 2013. He was releasing his first collection of six songs and having photographs taken by Danielle Herakovic. He said she asked him if he'd mind having the photos shared with Gemini Models. That has led to a handful of modelling assignments a year. This is his second appearance in Grand. You can listen to his music at soundcloud.com/andrew-dolson-612560304

Andrew Dolson

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS
PHOTOGRAPHY • ALISHA TOWNSEND

Sometimes, you just don't see the blessings coming. Training as an opera singer certainly wasn't on the radar of a teenaged Andrew Dolson as he spent up to eight hours a day practising his guitar so he'd be ready to enter the music program at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Yet a funny thing happened on this Waterloo native's way to becoming a classical guitarist.

While studying guitar at Laurier, he took a vocal techniques course as an elective and really enjoyed it.

He said he was then encouraged by teacher Debbie Lou Ludolph to audition for the school's voice program, but he wasn't interested. A program rule about focusing on just one instrument would have meant dropping the guitar to switch to voice if his audition had been successful. After all of the time and effort he had invested in the guitar, he wasn't about to leave that behind. Still, he said he was told to audition anyway, just for the experience of going through the process.

So he did, and the voice program wanted him. He was firm about sticking with the guitar.

Eventually, the rule was bent and he was allowed to pursue both instruments.

It all turned out to be a "big blessing." As a new student in the voice stream, he was put in a class with the school's new voice teacher, who just happened to be James Westman, the acclaimed opera singer based in Stratford.

"He's an incredibly gifted man and I was blessed to work with him," Dolson says.

Westman was one of many teachers along the way who made a difference for Dolson.

There was Kevin Coates, the guitar teacher at St. David Catholic Secondary School. He challenged Dolson with more difficult material to learn in Grade 12 and introduced him to guitarist Kevin Ramessar, who prepared Dolson for university. Once at Laurier, there was guitar teacher Terry McKenna and vocal instructor Ludolph.

"I've been absolutely blessed with great teachers all along the way," Dolson says. "Some of the most talented people you could meet and all of them kind-souled people."

Dolson graduated last year with a comprehensive bachelor of music degree with a focus on both instruments.

"I'd consider myself a singer before a guitarist these days," the 25-year-old says.

So let's recap.

Talent: check (along with his music degree, he has a six-song collection of original indie-pop tunes released in 2013)

Good looks: check (see our cover, fashion pages and above)

Charisma: check (spend the day with him shooting a fashion spread)


Athleticism: check (he was a competitive springboard diver as a teen; these days, he's into rock climbing)

Big break: still to come (until then, he is delivering furniture for St. Jacobs Furnishings)

What he says he really wants to do is musical theatre. Along with studying all that music at university, he landed a role in Laurier Musical Theatre's production of "Legally Blonde."

"I knew I liked (musical theatre), but then I fell in love with it," he says.

But he says he's finding it difficult to break into that world without a lot of show experience. He says it seems you have to rely on your resume to lead to an opportunity.

Like most things, it probably helps to know someone already in that field. You have to think it's just a matter of time before he receives that blessing. 

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