

Making a name for herself in LA

LA Weekly calls Western grad 'next great female comic'

Savannah Nelson
Special to the Times

In show business, promise often is revealed by a spark — of talent, humor or an unmatched stage presence.

Betsy Sodaro, a Western State Colorado University alum, exhibited such spark throughout her time in Gunnison, and she continues to awe audiences in Los Angeles. Sodaro, 29, was recently featured in *LA Weekly* as “the next great female comic” after her work with the improv group Upright Citizens Brigade and her role on NBC’s now-canceled show “Animal Practice.”

After all, Sodaro was raised in front of an audience.

Coming from a theater family in the Breckenridge area, Sodaro had much experience with acting and comedy when she arrived at Western. Besides acting, the 2006 Western grad participated in various sports and outdoor activities that rendered a good time. Her father was a children’s playwright, and Betsy found

herself cast in his shows as well as community theater productions.

Betsy often was awarded comedic roles. She found her niche in timing-driven laughter, as partly exhibited by her favorite shows growing up — “I Love Lucy,” “The Bob Newhart Show,” “Saturday Night Live” and “The Simpsons.”

Her time at Western, according to Paul Edwards, professor of communications and theater, allowed Sodaro to develop as an actor and performer.

“The nature of the theater program at Western was uniquely suited to the abilities and attitude of someone like Betsy,” he remarked. Western’s Peak Productions, being a small theater program, gave Sodaro the attention to focus on tailoring her talents. She was also a part of a student-run improvisational troupe, which Edwards claimed “allowed her to develop her already significant gifts in improv.”

Sodaro also considers Western to be a place where she grew within the theater program.

“At Western, I was able to get so much experience on stage,” she reflected. “I was doing about two shows a semester, which was great. I became super comfortable on

stage and I really started to find my voice as a performer.”

While in Gunnison, Sodaro also dedicated her time to performing in Gunnison Arts Center productions, which earned her even more time on a stage and several roles for her portfolio.

Sodaro moved to Los Angeles in 2007 and immediately immersed herself into the performing scene. She became involved with the Upright Citizens Brigade Theater, an improv and sketch comedy school and performance center, where she is still doing live shows. She also is touring the United States, filling festival and college auditoriums with side-splitting laughter.

Her spark and genuine personality is what makes her so deserving of success, Edwards noted.

“Betsy was and is a joy to work with — gracious, sharing, completely dedicated to performing,” he said. “She has an outrageous sense of humor and degree of spontaneity that I have only seen in her and maybe one or two other students in 25-plus years of teaching at the college and university level.”

The future is looking bright for Sodaro, as she will be acting in the TBS show “Buzzys,” which is slated to come out in early 2015.



Western grad Betsy Sodaro, seated at left, performs improv comedy in Los Angeles.

Courtesy photo

She also has been cast in a Comedy Central show called “Big Time in Hollywood, FL,” coming out in the fall 2014.

Among her various endeavors, Sodaro is also writing her own sitcoms, with hopes of selling her ideas.

“If there’s anything the world should know about Betsy Sodaro,” Paul Edwards chimed in, “it’s that as a student, Betsy always made the most of any role in which she was cast. It didn’t matter how small, she would find a way to make her performance

a memorable one, and always in keeping with the spirit and focus of the production.”

While Edwards noted that Sodaro is not a singer, he cast her in the chorus of the musical “Little Shop of Horrors.”

“She had one line in one of the songs — that was it — but when she sang it, she brought the house down at every performance,” he explained. “That indicated to me that she had a future in show business.”

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