

Actor Profile Series - ERIC THOMAS FANCHER

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Eric Thomas Fancher

Sam Grey, Samantha Jude Photography

The 25th [profile](#) in the [Cleveland Performing Arts Examiner ACTOR PROFILE](#) series features **ERIC FANCHER**. This series (in interview form) is in process to “get to know” some of our own northeastern Ohio talent. Profiles will feature equity and non-equity actors, stage and screen actors, as well as young, old and in-between actors. These are your peers and your neighbors - please enjoy!

Full Name: Eric Thomas Fancher

Age: 22

Years acting: 5

“Day Job”: Department Manager at [Jos. A. Bank Clothiers](#), Rocky River

Resident city: Rocky River, Ohio

Official acting training: None

Kate Miller: So Eric- when you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Eric Fancher: I always wanted to be an inventor, because my favorite pop culture characters were Inspector Gadget and Caractacus Potts (from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*). That is, until I was about 10, at which point I really thought I could make it in the NBA. True story.

KM: Do you still "tinker" with inventions?

EF: Not really anymore. I used to take things apart, especially computers, and for a while through middle school and high school I was a computer wizard - first on Macs, then PCs. I would say the closest to inventing that I do is I re-purpose things... I'm a veritable McGuyver of junk.

KM: Do you still play basketball?

EF: Not regularly, though I do keep one in the trunk of my car in case I get bored around a basketball court.

KM: Why did you start acting?

EF: I liked a girl who joined the speech and debate (forensics) team at [Rocky River High School](#), and I figured it was a good way to get close to her. It didn't work. But then I found out that I was good at it, won some tournaments and went to the State Finals in Duo Interpretation. The first time I auditioned for an actual show, though, was done as a pact with my best friend, Devin. If he auditioned, then I'd audition. He and I played Mortimer and Jonathan Brewster, respectively, in *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

KM: Do you sing?

EF: I do. Typically baritone, but I've played tenor roles and could venture into the bass territory without too much of a struggle.

KM: Do you dance?

EF: I have taken some master classes, but mainly all my training was from doing shows. My first major experience with dancing was in the chorus in [Near West Theatre's](#) *Urinetown*. I realized with that experience that well-executed dancing can give a show a whole different kind of energy that springs out of nowhere.

KM: Any other actors in your family?

EF: My whole family has been caught by footlights at some point in their lives, but the foremost would be my father, **Jon Fancher**, who was a theatre major at The College of Wooster before he became a Presbyterian minister. Everyone else it seems had more of an acting "phase", versus seeing it as something to do as a career. My father has continued to do shows, as recently as last summer's *Me and My Girl* with [Mercury Summer Stock](#).

KM: How has your dad influenced your life both professionally and personally?

EF: He is a big influence on my life, sometimes in more ways than I'm aware. Professionally, he has been a gateway to some really cool people. I remember being at a car wash fundraiser for the now defunct Rocky River Community Theater and meeting [local actor / director] **Kevin Joseph Kelly** years before I started doing theater, and five years before I ever auditioned for him. One of the really great

things about my whole family is that they are so supportive of what I do, because they are all artists as well. My older brother and my mother are both music teachers and my younger brother is at college in various vocal groups. My dad has influenced me personally mostly by his sense of humor, probably by exposing me to the Marx Brothers and Charlie Chaplin at a young age.

KM: What is your dream role?

EF: I have many. First and foremost is probably Sweeney Todd, because it's one of the most epic baritone roles in all of musical theatre. The other big one would be Robert (or Bobby) from *Company*. He is such a complex and real character, and I feel like I connect with him on many levels, including and especially his flaws.

KM: Who are your favorite actors and actresses?

EF: One of my favorites of all time is Charlie Chaplin. Everything he did was pure, unadulterated genius. He was also a pioneer in the medium of film. As far as those actors working today, Sam Rockwell and Gary Oldman are probably my top two actors on celluloid. They are both so unique in their choices of roles and varied performances from film to film. Raul Esparza tops the list of stage actors for many of the same reasons, varied roles as well as an amazing voice that any singer would sell their soul for. Actresses? Kate Winslet is gorgeous, and amazingly talented.

KM: How do you prep for an audition?

EF: Get my act together with a good song and monologue, usually suggested by my theatre friends, and then I show up. I find the easiest way to do well at an audition is to just think as though you already have the part. It makes it easier to make specific acting choices that way and also puts you in a more confident mindset.

KM: What do you do to get through a rough tech week?

EF: Keep your cast close, but your friends closer. Sometimes reaching outside of the process is the only way to stay sane in a hectic tech environment.

KM: What's your favorite role you've ever played?

EF: Either Cinderella's Prince/Wolf in *Into the Woods* at [Tri-C West](#), or Dakin in *The History Boys* at [Beck Center](#). Though, there is a soft place in my heart for Frog in *A Year With Frog and Toad* at [Cassidy Theatre](#).

KM: *Frog and Toad* - why was that special to you?

EF: The show itself is a gem that is hardly ever produced because its run on Broadway was a joke. It's a children's show and they were charging 60 bucks a head to see it!? Not gonna work. But the show is charming, witty, and absolutely just as (if not more enjoyable) for adults than kids. The production I was in at the Cassidy Theatre was a near perfect experience for me. It had a perfect cast, beautiful scenery done by **Meghan Mohler**, and a passionate director/choreographer in my closest friend, **Sarah Clare**. The reason it's one of my favorite roles I've played, though, isn't because of these things. There is a truth to the show that surpasses anything the kids in the audience would

understand. The show isn't about their adventures with kites, and cookies, and scary stories; it's about friendship, and about how two friends can really be there for each other when the other one screws up, or needs his support, or just needs someone to talk to. It's played out with animal characters from "I Can Read" books, but the human element remains. Very similar to the way Charles Schulz demonstrated in his comics a world filled with failure and victory, ignorance and knowledge reflecting the world we live in, but using children as our avatars.

KM: For you, what's the hardest part about acting?

EF: Finding new things to bring to characters that are sometimes so stuck in being done one way. Or it could be taking risks on characters- taking them to a "dark" place, or a place that you yourself would never go.

KM: Any particular venues where you work primarily?

EF: I do things all over, but I frequently and recently have done work at [Cassidy Theatre](#), The [Beck Center](#), [TrueNorth Cultural Arts](#), and with The [Cleveland Shakespeare Festival](#).

KM: You have your own fan group on Facebook- how did "[Fancher Fans](#)" start and what do you think about it?

EF: A friend of mine from Near West Theatre started it in 2007, she has since left it alone for 2 years. I am not an administrator, and don't really feel the need for my own fan group. But I will not lie, I have invited people to join my fan club!

KM: Hobbies?

EF: I love to golf, and on lazy days I like to plan my "dream productions" of shows that I plan to direct, once I feel qualified enough to do so.

KM: Do you have any pets?

EF: I have a jade plant. It's easier to care for.

KM: Paper or plastic?

EF: Paper- easier to recycle.

KM: Democrat? Republican? Other?

EF: Democrat.

KM: What's your favorite spot to eat in Cleveland?

EF: [Angelo's Pizza](#) in Lakewood. Half price Mondays.

KM: What's your favorite thing to order from Angelo's?

EF: Large pepperoni, deep dish.

KM: And your tips for surviving Cleveland's winter?

EF: Don't drive like an idiot, and make sure you wear long pants.

KM: How does your family celebrate the holidays?

EF: The five Fanchers get together with my local extended family, and we open gifts and eat food. Then I like to leave my family in the evening and balance out the old tradition by making new traditions with my friends.

KM: What do you want for Christmas?

EF: To give everyone the perfect gift... and not having to be broke because of it!

KM: Finally, why do YOU think Cleveland rocks?

EF: Cleveland rocks because as a city, we are perpetual losers who refuse to throw in the towel. What better place for art to exist?

BE SURE to check out the **SLIDESHOW** for more photos of Eric.

Are you a Fancher Fan? Tell us about it in the COMMENTS section!

Know an actor that would be a great profile story? Email KATE MILLER at

KateMillerExaminer@yahoo.com.

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Do you have a Cleveland performing arts related event or story? If so, contact *Cleveland Performing Arts Examiner*, **KATE MILLER** at KateMillerExaminer@yahoo.com with your pitch!



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