

Daniel Boothe

A happy fall day here in beautiful Muskegon to you and welcome to JayTalk, Muskegon Community College's new official podcast where we talk all things Jayhawks. I am Daniel Booth. As always, rocking the mic next to me and co-hosting the effort is Sue Samaniego as we welcome you to episode #4. Coming up on the program, we sit down with two thespians, actors, Sue, 2 cast members of MCC's latest production, Mousetrap, Oliver Vanderboo and Emily James in studio to discuss the production. And Sue Samaniego later will fill us in on her neck of the woods here at MCC. as we break down her role here at the college and the importance of her work in the foundation. That is all coming up in just a few moments, but first, Sue, let's get to our two very special guests who are joining us in studio. Sue, the honors.

Sue Samaniego

Okay, our first two guests are two actors appearing in the upcoming production of The Mousetrap. It's a real whodunit murder mystery, and it will run from November 7th through the 10th. Of course, it will be in MCC's Overbrook Theater. Performances will be at 7 P.m. each night, and on Saturday and Sunday, there will be matinees at 3 P.m. Please welcome Oliver Vanderboo and Emily James. All right. Hello.

Daniel Boothe

Welcome to J Talk. Welcome to J Talk. Emily, Oliver, thank you so much for your time and for joining us here. You are our first students on the podcast. Well, you're not necessarily a student, Emily. You're just an actor, but...

Emily James

Excuse me, actually, I'm a student, just not here.

Daniel Boothe

Just an actor. You're just an actor though.

Emily James

I'm multifaceted, I promise.

Daniel Boothe

Congratulations and welcome to JTalk. First and foremost, what we like to do here on the podcast is get to know everyone a little bit better, a little bit deeper, kind of get to know the

stories behind the person, behind the microphone. So let's start with you, Emily, and your experience. What landed you here at MCC and involved in this production of The Mouse Trap? Have you always been an actor?

Emily James

Yeah, I've been doing theater since I was in elementary school with school productions. And then my first quote unquote professional production, I guess in the community was when I was about 10 in like this like 70s musical version of Snow White called Mirror, Mirror. It was very interesting and strange. And been kind of acting ever since. I took about a nine year hiatus between 2015 and last year. And then I auditioned for some local theater. And through one of my friends I did a show with at Central Park Players. And she's like, you should audition. And so I did, and the rest is history. Here I am.

Daniel Boothe

Oh, welcome, welcome. All right, Oliver, same question. How'd you manage to find your way here to MCC? Is this your first production or is this your millionth production? Tell us the details.

Oliver Vanderboo

I am an early college student, so I was in high school when I started classes here. This is my third year, so I'm not in high school anymore. But I've been doing theater since middle school, just like little shows at high school. This is my first show outside of my high school, so it's been like being on stage, because I helped with I&U, which was a great show. So this is my first production on stage, and it's been so great, like solidified that this is what I want to do all the time, which is great, because I was kind of already thinking about it, and I did this I was like, actually, this is it.

Sue Samaniego

So Oliver, how do you like MCC's theater department?

Oliver Vanderboo

It's so different, obviously, from high school, but in a lot of ways, it feels more, I know it's technically not professional because it's a college, but it feels more professional and more like mature, I guess. I don't. Yes, if anybody who goes to my high school is listening to me right now. If anybody's like, are they here now?

Emily James

Some of these college kids are more mature than the high school ones.

Oliver Vanderboo

Yeah. Who would have thought? Wow. It's so strange. Because in high school you would have our director was also our stage manager and she was also our light person. She was also our sound person and she just kind of did everything and she was stressed out all the time. And now it just feels more chill and everybody loves each other and I love everyone and everything's so great.

Emily James

Rainbows and kittens. Literally the shining stars.

Sue Samaniego

How about you, Emily? What has your experience been as you've been in this show?

Emily James

I, and I've said this to many people in the community, that I am so impressed with the professionalism and the resources. Our director, Allison, has been so organized, and Oliver can attest to this. But she is one of the most organized directors ever. We also have a composer who has composed music specifically for this show. And each of our characters, I believe, has theme music, which is incredible and more than I could have ever dreamed. We just got done with our light and sound cue to cue rehearsal. And it was spectacular. I think we were all kind of in awe. We had no idea it was going to be like this. So it's been incredible.

Daniel Boothe

That's fantastic to hear. And you know, if you both have a chance, you should go back and listen to episode #2, because we interview Allison on that podcast. And she talks all about Mousetrap and she talks all about the theater department. But the point being is this. wait till you hear her resume prior to coming to MCC. And that's what this podcast is really all about, is shining a spotlight on the people here at MCC, because there are so many awesome people that we are so lucky to have. And Allison Paris is absolutely.

Emily James

I completely agree.

Daniel Boothe

I hope she's listening and I hope she's blushing. All right, so Mousetrap, let's talk about Mousetrap. This is the longest running show in London's history. It's gone on for 70 years.

Tell us a little bit about it and tell us there's a big secret that we can't reveal, right? So tell us what mouse comes about.

Emily James

It's more into secrecy, actually. Well, like you said, it's one of the longest running shows. And the reason it's one of the longest running shows is because before the show starts, there's kind of an agreement between the audience and the actors and cast and crew that you do not share whodunit. And that is why it's run so long, is because people don't share. So people don't know who did it. So I think that's like one of the coolest parts of the show is that it still has mystery after all these years.

Daniel Boothe

Right, so Emily, are you ready to reveal right now who did it?

Emily James

Yes.

Oliver Vanderboo

Yeah, I'll tell everyone right now.

Emily James

It will take 20 bucks and a free lunch.

Daniel Boothe

He's spoken like a starving actor. Yeah.

Emily James

Got to make it somehow out there.

Oliver Vanderboo

That's for real.

Daniel Boothe

Tell us what characters you both play.

Oliver Vanderboo

I play Christopher Wren. He is a, as described in the show, a flighty, neurotic, you little architect who is just kind of trying to find himself in his own brain, I think.

Emily James

He might be my favorite character, actually. Oh my God. He's just really, really fun to watch on stage. Oliver does an amazing job bringing him to life.

Oliver Vanderboo

I'm so touched.

Emily James

Oh my gosh. Guys, this is a special moment. And my character is Miss Casewell, and she is ahead of her time, I think, as far as knowing who she is. And I guess she's described in the script as quote unquote man-ish, but what we take that as is just kind of assertive for the time, because this is set in 1949, I believe.

Oliver Vanderboo

It's 1940 something. I think

Emily James

the late 1940s. So, she's got trousers and she kind of like is like an assertive, like interesting character.

Sue Samaniego

And like a normal woman these days.

Emily James

Exactly. I feel very akin to her because even though she is like enigmatic character, a lot of things she pushes down. And And that will be, discussed.

Sue Samaniego

I'm very much looking forward to seeing it. I do have my tickets already.

Daniel Boothe

Oh, do you? I do. I'm kind of in the show myself. A little bit, a little bit.

Emily James

This is news to us.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah, I know. We need to drop this little nugget on the, there's a mouse trap commercial on YouTube. At the very end of the, there's a little radio spot where I go, it's a real Who Dummit.

Emily James

That's you. Oh my God. I didn't know that. It was him the whole time. Actually, you're the one who done it.

Daniel Boothe

He did it, actually.

Emily James

The whole time. Spoilers, guys.

Sue Samaniego

All I can say is, if you're not excited about coming to see this show yet, you haven't heard these two topics.

Daniel Boothe

They're so excited. I know.

Sue Samaniego

I'm so ready for this.

Daniel Boothe

All right, tell us the details. Do you know it off the top of your head? Give us the details. And if I want to come to the show, when is it? Where is it?

Oliver Vanderboo

From November 7th to the 10th. 7th to the 9th, we have 7 P.m. shows. 7.30, the doors open at 7. You can get tickets online or at the door. On Saturday and Sunday, we have matinee shows at 3 P.m. Our Saturday matinee shows, we have two very wonderful understudies who will be taking the place of two of the characters who won't believe me if I tell them directly, but they're doing a great job. And we love them so much. Shout out. Shout out Alexi and Alex. Yeah, shout out to Alexi and Alex. We love them.

Daniel Boothe

Oh, Emily and Oliver, thank you so much for coming on the show. And on behalf of everyone here at Muskegon Community College and JTalk, break a leg.

Emily James

Thank you.

Oliver Vanderboo

Yeah, of course. Thank you.

Daniel Boothe

Well, are you nervous to be in the hot seat here?

Sue Samaniego

You know, it's in place to be, but talking about my favorite things.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah, there you go. There you go. And I think it's important. because we host this podcast, but I think it's also important for people to know who you are and what you do here at the college and the difference that you are making. So we're going to handle this just like we do all of our other guests. We're going to start at the beginning, tell our listeners a little bit about yourself, give me some details. Where did you grow up? Where did you go to school?

Sue Samaniego

Okay. Yeah, I think I'll keep from asking myself questions because that might be a little crazy.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah, there you go.

Sue Samaniego

So I actually grew up early childhood through till I was like 12 in the city of Detroit, then moved out to the Heartland area, which is about halfway between Flint and Ann Arbor, for those who don't know it, right on N-59. graduated high school there, went to Eastern Michigan University for both my bachelor's and my master's in special education for speech language impairment. So I was a speech language pathologist for 22 years.

Daniel Boothe

No kidding. Yeah. See, I didn't even know that.

Sue Samaniego

So I worked primarily in hospitals early on with neurologic issues like head injuries and, you know, strokes and things like that. And then ended up also working in the schools for a while. and just got to the point where I wanted to do something different. I lived in quite a small town, and my husband worked at a community college there. They had a communications and PR position open, and I thought a lot of what I did was those things. So I applied for that job. and got to work there in the community college. Spent a lot of time with the foundation people because that we do, as indicators, we're talking about all the things going on. And I just fell in love with the fundraising side of things. I'm A first-generation student who also only got to go to school because I got scholarships. Luckily, I had the academics to get me those. So this...

Daniel Boothe

Sure, good for you.

Sue Samaniego

Yeah, this piece really, what I'm doing now is sort of giving back for what I was able to get out of that. from someone else giving and giving me a chance. I'm trying to do the same thing for those in the future. Came here to get back to my family and do a little bit more work with developing A-team. I've never had a team before, so having a few people sort of helping out really gives us the ability to do so much more.

Daniel Boothe

When did you arrive here at Muskegon Community College?

Sue Samaniego

I started here on May 1st in 2023, so it's just been about a year and a half now. I love everything about it. I felt like when I read the description on the internet of this position that it was written for me.

Daniel Boothe

Awesome.

Sue Samaniego

I did a little poking and prodding to get the process going. And worked hard to get the position, but here I am and loving it.

Daniel Boothe

Well, we're so glad to have you. There's a lot to unpack here, Sue. So let me ask you a couple quick questions. Let me start with the first basic one. For people who don't understand, when they hear the word foundation, they hear the word fundraising, some people might say, well, what about tuition? What happens? Why does a college need to raise money? A, what is a foundation? Can you kind of go into the details of what your position entails, why it's important?

Sue Samaniego

So the foundation itself is an entity put in place to fund the things that we need beyond what's paid for by state funding and tuition. Tuition really goes to

Daniel Boothe

Keeping the lights on, keeping

Sue Samaniego

the lights on, keeping the, equipment needed for students to do whatever it is they need to do, maybe in a lab, it would be the lab equipment. If we really want to build beyond that without increasing tuition, which is obviously one of our major things we believe in is keeping it accessible, we have to find funds to elsewhere to really improve what we want to do and build and become the excellent college that we are.

Daniel Boothe

And that's so important. I mean, look at this recording studio that we are sitting in, this beautiful space that we are sitting in recording this podcast. That's all made possible through funding. It would not be possible. And it's important to give those beautiful spaces to our students who so deserve it, first-generation students like yourself. And so that's actually my next question. As a first-generation student, I'm sure that drives a lot of your work and always keeps it in the back of your head, the importance of fundraising and the importance of giving these students a chance. Is that correct?

Sue Samaniego

Absolutely. a lot of the students that, let me step back. The reason why community colleges were put in place to begin with was to increase access for people who don't live close to those four-year schools, who live in rural areas, who live in places where those aren't accessible. It's to open that up to everyone. So it's really important to me to make sure that those opportunities within their communities are excellent and put them in a place where they are ready for the job market or ready to transfer on to those four-year schools and jump right in line with everyone who started there. Studies have actually

shown that people who begin at community colleges can be even more successful than those who began at a four-year school.

Daniel Boothe

Sue, thank you so much for the time. That wasn't so bad, was it? No. I still like being on the other side better,

Sue Samaniego

but I love what I do, so I love it.

Daniel Boothe

Well, thanks so much, everyone. That is Sue Samaniego. She's the Chief Advancement Officer, and that will do it for this edition of JTalk. I am Daniel Booth.

Sue Samaniego

And I am Sue Samaniego.

Daniel Boothe

We will do it all again in a couple of weeks. Until then, have a wonderful and a safe week here at beautiful Muskegon Community College.