

Melissa Johnson

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I grew up in a small town in South Carolina, the daughter of a dance teacher and an Air Force pilot. As a child, I was mesmerized by the jacket cover of a Broadway Hits album that had several show titles framed in Marquis lights. After seeing the sidewalk art scene from Mary Poppins, I ran home, put the album cover on the floor, closed my eyes, and tried to jump into it over and over. I was convinced that if I just believed hard enough, I would open my eyes and be in Times Square.

On a subsequent trip to New York City, I saw a musical workshop performed by kids, about kids in show business. One of the songs was titled Sixty Second Superstar of Madison Avenue. From that moment on, I knew that I wanted to someday be in commercials.

Back in South Carolina, I took every opportunity to perform and was cast in several productions at the historic Dock Street Theatre in Charleston, the first building in America to be built exclusively for theatrical performances. I also sang and danced for two seasons at The Crystal Pistol Music Hall at Six Flags Over Georgia and enjoyed every “cheezy” moment of it.

Making my way north, I performed at The Village Dinner Theatre in Raleigh, N.C. for a year in the Equity Apprenticeship Program where I was cast in six classic Musical Theatre ingenue roles, garnering points towards my Equity card.

Next stop, Manhattan! With Equity card in hand, I landed the role of Jan in The Jones Beach Theatre production of Grease and followed that up with the role of Muriel in the Equity Library Theatre production of Take Me Along and Maya in a workshop production of Shaw’s, Simpleton of the Unexpected Aisles at The Lambs Theatre on West 44th Street.

Having finally realized my dream of living and working in Manhattan, I continued to perform in Cabaret venues and trained with numerous acting coaches, including JoAnna Beckson (2 year Meisner Foundation Program); Gene Lasko (scene study); and Kate McGregor-Stewart.

Booking my first TV commercial as a fresh faced counter girl for the fast food chain, Taco Tico, I found myself hooked on the creative and financial rewards of acting in over fifty commercials while enjoying other acting endeavors.

After an unexpected break from acting to focus on raising my beautiful daughter, Crystal, I have now returned with more gratitude than ever as I, (represented by the Don Buchwald Agency) run around the city with each audition and booking in what I endearingly refer to as “The Showbiz Shuffle.”