JoboD aNd DuKe's MidsUmmer drEam

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Majuro's favorite Music Men, Jobod Silk and Duke Gaston, are set to train with Shakespeare & Company this summer in Lenox, Massachusetts courtesy of the non-profit Youth Bridge Global organization, which is raising funds and support for scholarships for both actors worth over $5,000 for board and tuition.

Theatre itself is an art form where live performers present the experience of true or imagined stories.

For Majuro Baptist Christian Academy senior Jobod and University of the South Pacific freshman Duke, an alumnus of MBCA, theatre is "discipline, growth, confidence, and fun" – which is why they are excited to take their acting further by immersing in this four-week intensive training program in the US.

Daily classes will focus on Elizabethan dance, monologues and sonnets, the actor/audience relationship, and hand-to-hand stage fight to name a few.

Both charismatic leads wrapped up their six-day performance of The Music Man two Saturdays ago and life now "feels empty" as though "we have no lives," the two 18-year-old actors dramatized. Their first dip with theatre acting was in the 2017 bilingual Oklahoma! production, where Jobod sang the tenor vocal part of Will Parker and Duke took on the baritone role of Ali Hakim.

This dip became a dive into the following year's musical Grease, with Jobod as the slick Danny Zuko and Duke as right hand T-bird Kenickie.

Their very first audition was "nerve-wracking," they said, but it was thanks to veteran actor and assistant director Tommy Kabua, who makes a strict director as Professor Andrew Garrod, that they were introduced to the world of theatre. While Jobod and Duke love performing in tailored costumes, especially the T-bird jacket, it is the curtain call that highlights everything leading up to the show and the show itself as greatly "satisfying and fulfilling."

Marshallese are musical people with children growing up singing along to church hymns and birthday songs, so it is natural for both young men to nurture their musical skill through the ukulele, guitar, keyboard — and, for Jobod, learning to read sheet music from his grandmother. They admire Hugh Jackman for his portrayal of Curly McLain in Oklahoma! and the imaginative PT Barnum in the movie musical The Greatest Showman.

Working with others may lead to some "high blood" times, but it is also incredibly pleasurable, says Duke. Jobod adds that it is humbling and expands friendship zones. They have learned to be punctual, to listen but be confident at the same time under Professor Garrod's guidance.

With the training program they hope to transcend what they think to be the extent of their capabilities and build on their confidence both on and off the stage. They look forward to meeting new people, trying scrumptious food, and having a lot of fun.











Actors Jobod Silk and Duke Gaston, center, with their leading ladies, Ikue Alik, left, and Carnie Reimers. Silk is at left and right, and Gaston featured in the two top right photos.

Photos: Hilary Hosia

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LAST WEEK'S ANSWER

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