BGSU grads’ creativity shines on national stage

Bowling Green State University alumni can be found in nearly every facet of entertainment. “Desperate Housewives,” “Scandal,” “90210” and “Hart of Dixie” are just a few of the television series Bethany Rooney has put her stamp on as one of today’s most sought-after television directors. Rooney holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from BGSU.

The Findlay native got her start at WBGU-TV, working as a production assistant, running camera, producing, on-air talent and directing.

“I did a little bit of everything and loved it,” Rooney said. Her contacts at WBGU led to her first job in the business. She called WBGU alumna Michelle Gallery, who worked in the accounting department of Mary Tyler Moore Studios and found Rooney a job as secretary to Bruce Paltrow. He gave her an episode to direct, and Rooney has been a freelance director ever since.

Rooney has worked with some of the biggest names in the business, including Robert Downey Jr., George Clooney, Hilary Swank, and Angela Bassett.

Swanton native Brian Dzyak also left Bowling Green for the bright lights of Hollywood. On DVDs of the “Bourne Legacy,” “G.I. Joe: Retaliation,” or “American Reunion,” the extra footage is the work of Dzyak, who travels the world as a cameraman on movie sets.

He said he fell into the job by accident after moving to Los Angeles.

“The DVD market was just heating up, and studios were getting hungry for behind-the-scenes footage and interviews for new and old titles,” Dzyak said. “The behind-the-scenes/DVD path has kept me working solidly for years now.”

Dzyak was a radio-television-film major at BGSU. He began as an editor at WBGU-TV, then started shooting as a field cameraman.

“I learned a lot from the real-world experience and from the staff, many of whom I am still friends with today.”

While he and Rooney were making their mark in California, Hilary Maiberger left the Golden State to come to Ohio to pursue her dreams. Now she’s living the life of a Disney princess as Belle in the national tour of Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast.”

“It’s one of my favorite movies,” said Maiberger, who earned her master’s degree in vocal performance from BGSU. “She has the talent, intelligence, looks and perseverance to succeed,” said Christopher Scholl, one of her music professors.

“Bowling Green was a great fit for me,” Maiberger said. “The faculty all were supportive and believed in my talents, and they encouraged me to audition for operas and theater.”

“Beauty and the Beast” isn’t the only show with a BGSU connection. Shaun Moorman was involved with the management of hits such as “Mamma Mia!,” “Billy Elliot the Musical,” “Ghost,” and “The Book of Mormon.” Moorman graduated with a degree in music education, but a chance to work in business and operations in BGSU’s Department of Theatre and Film changed his career path.

“I helped to manage the Huron Playhouse, the summer stock division, and wrote grants for the department. That job quickly grew over a few years.”

Through his connection with alumnus Dean Greer, a stage manager for “Mamma Mia!,” Moorman was offered a position on a new Broadway show.

“Never in my wildest dreams would I think I would be managing some of the biggest shows on Broadway.”

The future is also bright for current BGSU students hoping to break into entertainment. They can graduate knowing there is a strong network of Falcon alumni willing to help them get that first chance.